

Thank Goodness the Market Crashed JAMES CRAMER

THE NEW REPUBLIC Apologies for Miranda JEFFREY ROSEN

Apologists for Kofi Annan DAVID RIEFF

AY 1, 2000

Does the New New Left Have a Brain?

FRANKLIN FOER
THE EDITORS



portable
drinking mug
(‘cause
styrofoam kills!)

cargo pants:
(paint splattered
as evidence of
manual labor)

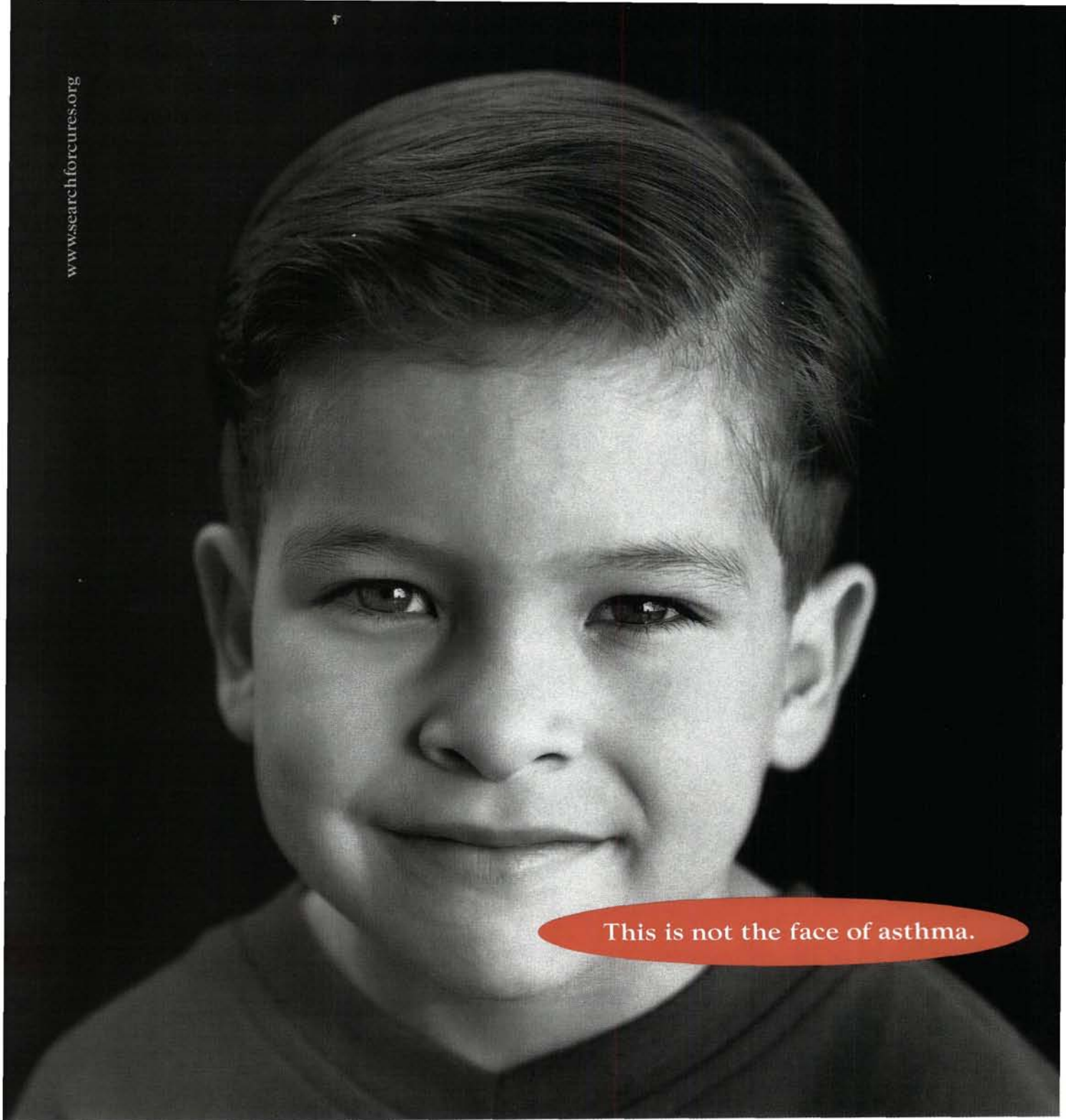
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Leading the way in the search for cures

THE NEW REPUBLIC

*A Journal of Politics
and the Arts*

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

MAY 1, 2000

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Risk management

TO THE EDITORS:

As a family physician practicing in HMO-land, I found that Gregg Easterbrook's evenhanded discussion conveyed a lot of the improvements due to managed care as I experience them ("Managing Fine," March 20). But he omitted one important feature of HMO care that is often overlooked or misunderstood. In California, back in the old days of "fee-for-service" medicine, the insurance companies kept ten to 15 percent of the premium dollar, and 85 cents out of every dollar went for patient care. Now, under managed care, the insurance companies keep 15 to 30 percent of the premium for marketing, administration, and profit, and another 15 to 20 percent goes to administration for the physician groups that are delegated the task of "taking risk to manage the care." Thus, in spite of the savings and efficiencies that Easterbrook rightfully acknowledges, none of these resources are plowed back into improved or expanded patient care.

JEOFFRY B. GORDON, M.D., M.P.H.
San Diego, California

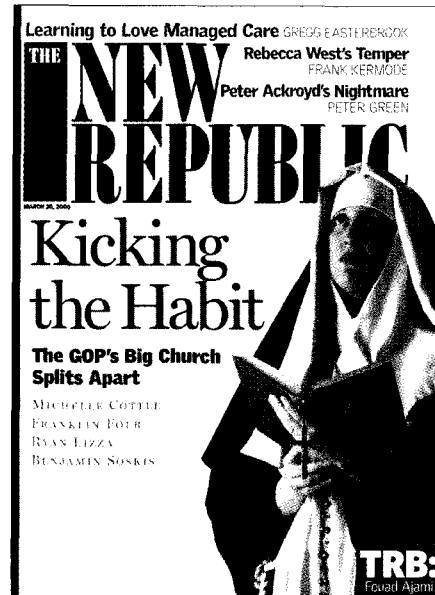
TO THE EDITORS:

I'm not enough of an expert to dispute the macro points in Gregg Easterbrook's paean to HMOs, but my family's experiences suggest that he is overlooking quite a bit. The level of health care we have received in the United States has generally been lower than it was in Israel, where we lived for several years and which has a quasi-public health care system. More troubling still, we have found that most of the doctors we have seen in this country seem to regard medical care as a business and nothing more. The free market may or may not keep costs down and breed efficiency, but it is destructive to the human relationships that are essential to true health.

MARTIN J. GIDRON
Frederick, Maryland

TO THE EDITORS:

Among the sillier arguments in Gregg Easterbrook's article is his attempt to prove that the industry has improved the health of the American public. He notes that deaths due to heart disease, stroke, hypertension, AIDS, and most forms of cancer are declining and states, "Almost every U.S. health care trend has been positive during the decade of managed care." No credible case can be made that improvements in mortality from the diseases he mentions have anything to do with



managed care. However, the U.S. Public Health Service, several surgeons general, the National Institutes of Health, anti-tobacco activists, thousands of individual physicians, and even the pharmaceutical industry all can claim some measure of credit for improvements in mortality in this country because of their decades-long efforts. A for-profit managed care company has yet to develop a vaccine, sponsor or conduct a large clinical trial demonstrating the beneficial effects of lowering high blood pressure or cholesterol, or put forward an anti-tobacco lawsuit. But the companies seek to profit by applying these advances to healthy populations, and they have attempted to insulate themselves against risk, and ensure financial success, by shunning care of sicker patients who are expensive to treat.

NEIL W. SCHLUGER, M.D.
Associate Professor of Medicine
and Public Health
Columbia University College of
Physicians and Surgeons
New York, New York

GREGG EASTERBROOK REPLIES:

Neil W. Schluger's argument that Americans are becoming more healthy but managed care has nothing to do with it, because it is the physicians who actually administer therapy, seems to me a little like arguing that millions of Americans have cars, but Ford and General Motors have nothing to do with it—it is solely the result of efforts by salespeople and mechanics.

Interest rate

TO THE EDITORS:

I was baffled by Fouad Ajami's lamentations about Americans' inward focus

("National Lampoon," March 20). As an American living and working abroad, I stand in stark contrast to the "model American" Ajami portrayed, as do many of my college friends currently living around the world as Peace Corps volunteers, Fulbright scholars, journalists, or teachers. There is clearly a slice of American society that takes far more than a passing interest in foreign culture and politics. Indeed, a visit to any college campus will show that many language classes are over-registered.

Further, as numerous polls have shown, the myth of the United States' isolationist tendency is just that—a myth. Americans are far more interested in world affairs than they are given credit for, even if they do not always support jeopardizing their soldiers' lives to prove it. For example, I would make an educated guess that the American media devotes more time to the Middle East peace process—and the Clinton administration's prominent role in it—than does the press in any other country outside the Middle East. How many Central Africans have spent time thinking about Maori culture in New Zealand? Just as they have different concerns, so do many Americans who might not be interested in the travails of a modern-day T.E. Lawrence.

LINDA SHARABY
Ramat Gan, Israel

Whose trade organization?

TO THE EDITORS:

Ryan Lizza's article attempting to besmirch Public Citizen's long opposition to the World Trade Organization (WTO) was highly deceptive ("Silent Partner," January 10). Lizza's suggestion that our work in Seattle—and indeed all of our trade work—was financed by corporate mogul Roger Milliken is incorrect.

Indeed, our top two trade staff members informed Lizza that Milliken did not "bankroll" Public Citizen's trade program. Because Lizza omitted this, among other facts, your readers were misled. And, throughout the story, Lizza used innuendo, cited unnamed sources, and recited old, unsubstantiated rumors and slurs, although he had been told they were false.

Perhaps most amusing was the notion that Public Citizen, a leading group in organizing international NGO strategies and documents on how to turn around our current trade systems, is isolationist. Anyone who reads our website knows that Public Citizen supports the need for global commercial rules. However, the current set of such rules unnecessarily and unacceptably invades domestic regulatory

matters, systematically subjugating basic human rights and needs such as food, security, health, safety, and environmental protection to commercial imperatives.

Among other things he got wrong, Lizza suggests we have no positive agenda for the global economy. In fact, if Lizza had read our recent book, *Whose Trade Organization?: Corporate Globalization and the Erosion of Democracy*, he would have seen our seven recommendations for getting the WTO out of the health, safety, and environmental regulatory areas it has inappropriately and undemocratically invaded so that citizens can benefit from a fair system of global trade rules.

JOAN CLAYBROOK
President
Public Citizen
Washington, D.C.

RYAN LIZZA REPLIES:

Joan Claybrook protests too much. I never reported that Roger Milliken finances Public Citizen—only that close allies of the group suspected that he did. Nevertheless, Public Citizen still refuses to reveal the extent of the group's relationship, financial or otherwise, with Milliken, the right-wing, union-busting billionaire who finances Pat Buchanan, the John Birch Society, and various anti-free-trade think tanks. Claybrook ominously accuses me of reporting "unsubstantiated rumors" and "slurs." She says I omitted facts and suggests there were numerous things I "got wrong." I await her letter detailing these slurs, omissions, and errors, because they are not specified in her reply.

Claybrook says that I "was informed by [Public Citizen's] top two trade staff members that Milliken did not 'bankroll' Public Citizen's trade program." If these top two trade staff members (Lori Wallach and Michael Dolan) had talked openly with me, maybe they would have said something like that. Wallach refused to return a half-dozen phone calls after she realized I wanted to talk about Milliken. Dolan ended an on-the-record interview with me at Wallach's insistence. Wallach did finally respond to an e-mail I sent her and informed me of Public Citizen's widely known policy of not taking corporate money. I e-mailed Wallach back and asked if Milliken *personally* has ever given money to Public Citizen. I'm still waiting for a reply. Public Citizen's official spokesman informed me that he could neither confirm nor deny a financial relationship with Milliken, and that is exactly what I reported. Claybrook now says that Public Citizen's trade program is not "bankroll[ed]" by Milliken and that the suspi-

cion among some of the anti-globalization protesters that Milliken helped finance the Seattle operations is "incorrect." But, when I recently asked Wallach whether Milliken has ever had any financial relationship with Public Citizen or Citizen's Trade Campaign (a sister organization, run by Wallach, that was used to organize the Seattle protests), she refused to answer, no matter how many times I asked.

Wallach recently told *Foreign Policy* that her funding comes from foundations and members. When her interviewer asked, "Is the list of your funders available?" Wallach replied, "Yes." But, when I recently asked Public Citizen for this list, the group refused to release its individual donors or to confirm or deny that Milliken or any of his lobbyists are among them. It would provide me with only a list of foundation donors that didn't even include dollar amounts. Why doesn't Public Citizen end the non-denial denials and explain its connection to Milliken in full?

Claybrook also deems unfair the criticism I reported from labor and other progressive groups that the rhetoric of the Naderites has become increasingly indecipherable from that of economic nationalists like Milliken and Buchanan. Well, here is what Dolan, Public Citizen's number-two trade staffer and the man credited with organizing the Seattle protests, wrote when Buchanan announced his presidential candidacy last year: "[Buchanan] will be the only candidate in the 2000 presidential sweepstakes who will passionately and unconditionally defend the legitimate expectations of working families in the global economy."

Upward mobility

TO THE EDITORS:

In your editorial "Let Them Drive Cars" (March 20), you contend that the working poor "simply must be mobile" to compete for jobs "in our movement-oriented economy." If metropolitan regions around the country implemented effective requirements for affordable housing, the imbalance between where low-income job seekers live and where new job opportunities are available could be addressed, thereby reducing travel. Why not broaden the Individual Development Accounts you support to include any expenditure for getting to the work site? This could include, in addition to purchasing a new car, bus and train fares, buying a house close to a transit line, or purchasing the electronic hardware necessary to work from home.

DAVID VAN HATTUM
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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BERNARD LEWIS

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FROM WASHINGTON

Dire Straits

"I DO SAY ... that exile, not undertaken with any definite object, but forced upon men by the triumph of the opposing party, checks development and draws men away from the activities of life into the domain of fantasy," the Russian writer Alexander Herzen observed in his great nineteenth-century work on the topic, *My Past and Thoughts*. "Leaving their native land with concealed anger, with the continual thought of going back to it once more on the morrow, men do not move forwards but are continually thrown back upon the past. ... All émigrés, cut off from the living environment to which they have belonged, shut their eyes to avoid seeing bitter truths, and grow more and more acclimatized to a closed, fanatic circle consisting of inert memories and hopes that can never be realized."

In Little Havana, this circle of deadly memory now surrounds the house of Lázaro González—signifying an unending feud between exiles and their terrible twin and tormentor, the aging dictator of an island the exiles claim as their own. Pity the new country of the exiles: It is home and not home. It watches in bafflement as this piece of America verges on cultural and political secession. The great American promise of assimilation, the cult of newness that animates the American experiment, the promise that men and women would shed old grievances—these too are forcibly blocked from entering the González house. It is Cuban flags that the crowd waves and American laws in which they show such scant interest.

The chicken of the cold war has come home to roost. It was a terrible, cynical bargain from the start, the pact between the "North American government" and the exiles who insisted on their separateness, whose vanity and dreams of restoration successive administrations indulged and paid homage to. Our officials cannot feign innocence. The crowd in Little Havana

is screaming betrayal for a reason. For decades the panderers whispered sweet things about the imminent overthrow of the tyrant, the imminent return of the exiles, and their unique place in American politics and life in the meantime. And now the crowd expects it to make good.

Pity the new country: It didn't understand the feuds it made itself party to, the vengeance it stoked. There before the crowd and there chatting up Larry King is Gloria Estefan, music icon and businesswoman, emblem of crossover success—a woman who moved from the cloistered world of immigrants to bigger things. And in a small aside we learn that the singer's father was a bodyguard to Castro's awful predecessor, the dictator Fulgencio Batista. For the exiles and for many of their leaders, the cold war was a drapery, a thing of "the North American government," a way to dress up an old feud over land and honor and property, a private vengeance. A ruse to make the new country settle an old score.

If decade after decade of cynical gringos—from the cold warriors of the 1960s to New Jersey Senator Robert Torricelli—wished to pass it off as an epic struggle between tyranny and democracy, so be it, the exiles reasoned. Why quibble with gringos? They really couldn't get it anyway. (Charles Lane, in these pages, captured this brilliantly when he said he half expected the appearance in Miami of a t-shirt declaring, "It's a Cuban thing—you wouldn't understand.") The new country underwrote and indulged the fantasies of Cuban exceptionalism; they exempted the exiles from the immigration laws that apply to those of us who came to this country not by necessity but by choice. And the exiles expect such treatment to continue.

The TV screen has been brutally effective in this story. It catches the anger of Lincoln Diaz-Balart, a Republican congressman from Florida: he has made it in this new land, but his fury has not subsided. The new land is richer, bigger, and more powerful; but, to him and his ilk, the story is one of American betrayal. A pact was entered into in headier, more heated days, and now a rich postideological country, made complacent by success and commerce, is eager to walk away from yesterday's passion, from an earlier and tangled relationship.

When Representative Robert Menendez, a Democrat from New Jersey, tries to explain why Cubans deserve favored treatment, he hints at the deeper issue. "Cubans," he says, "are fleeing oppression and not some economic circumstance." Herein lies the source of Little Havana's indifference to the judgment of the rest of the country. The larger society is eager

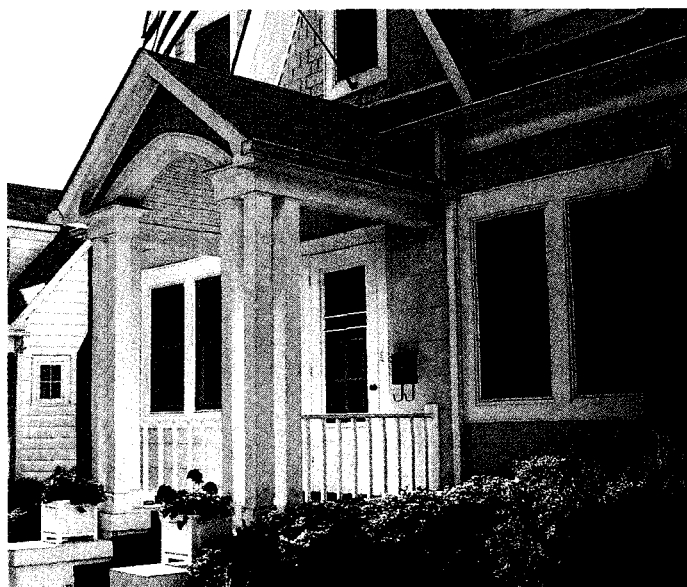
to get on with commerce and trade (the TV coverage of recent days has moved back and forth between their obsession and our obsession: Elián and the NASDAQ), and the exiles want to hold it to a higher purpose. The disregard for the American authorities, the contempt shown dithering Attorney General Janet Reno, who journeyed to Miami to cut a deal with Lázaro González, stem from deep roots. A society without memory and without mission invites and tempts fury and self-righteous indignation. Nowadays techies from Bangalore and Bangkok head to Silicon Valley with dreams of riches, of the IPO that will net them large fortunes. That kind of success—that sort of immigrant dream—the Cuban exiles can dismiss as a dream less exalted than their own.

Geography, of course, tempts the South Florida Cubans. Their coveted land lies across the Straits of Florida. On a clear day they swear that they can smell its breezes and see it in the haze. The successive migrations from the Old World were spared such illusions and such temptations. The one-way passage, the passage without illusions, the knowledge that the world of the fathers had been erased, that the worlds of Minsk and Riga and Odessa and Krakow were gone for good—that was the gift of those older migrations. For the Florida Cubans, however, the dreams of return and the dream of restoration remain, and they have been nothing but a curse and an alibi. And so those exiles have lived for more than four decades now, as the writer David Rieff once phrased it, "in a mingled state of perpetual disappointment and perpetual expectation."

The autumn of the patriarch in Havana has been interminable. He has survived the fall of the Berlin Wall by more than a decade, defied the endless rumors of plots and obituaries, outlived his likes in the Communist lands of the Eastern bloc—Tito and Honecker and Brezhnev and Ceaușescu, that whole sorry lot. He has taunted his foes in the United States and used their remittances—which are Cuba's single largest source of hard currency—to keep his regime and its wretched economy intact, if only barely.

But one day the dictator in Havana and his foes in Miami will pass from the scene. And Cuba will be seen for what it is, without the complications of defective memory, without the fantasies of exiles: a small, derelict Caribbean island in need of repair, too small to live up to the dreams grafted onto it by the exiles in Miami. A terrible nemesis, a disappointment, lies in wait for the exiles and their latifundia of the imagination.

FOUAD AJAMI



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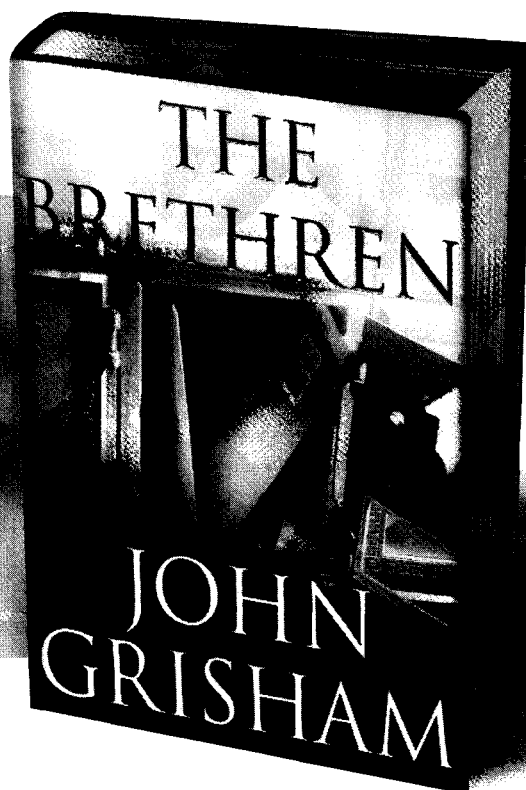
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March Madness

THE ANTI-GLOBALIZATION protesters who swarmed the nation's capital last week beg to be taken seriously. By focusing on the antics of their radical fringe, they complain, we ignore their deeper critique of global capitalism. The

trouble is, they don't have a deeper critique of global capitalism. What they have is an inchoate fear of trade in general and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in particular. Their moral impulse is commendable, but the worldview that undergirds it is delusional.

The primary fallacy of that worldview is that globalization is responsible for the miserable lot of the Third World poor. Most of the residents of the Third World were poor long before the recent rise in international trade and investment. Their failure to develop more rapidly results from a history of despotic and corrupt governments (governments usually hostile to free trade and investment); it has nothing to do with Starbucks. In fact, the Third World nations that have improved their living standards most—mainly those in East Asia—have done so precisely by integrating themselves into the international economy.

It is true, as the labor wing of the anti-globalization movement argues, that some of these Third World gains have come at the expense of manufacturing workers in the First World. But that's the point: American workers are threatened by Third World *gains*. The manufacturing jobs heading to Mexico and Bangladesh don't pay terrific wages and don't offer great working conditions, but they're better than what existed before: no foreign investment, no growth, and no rise in living standards. And that's why *democratic* governments are competing for overseas investors. The protesters holler about democracy, but they blithely ignore the fact that the more democratic the Third World has become, the more it has embraced globalization.

But, even if globalization were entirely destructive, the IMF and the World Bank would still represent bizarre targets for protest. The IMF aids nations that face short-term economic crises. The World Bank makes loans at below-market rates to chronically poor countries. They are instruments of the global economy in the same sense that the

Department of Housing and Urban Development is an instrument of the domestic economy: they allow global capitalism to function better by making it more humane. In effect, the Washington protesters were chaining themselves together to stop the building of schools, hospitals, and sewage-treatment plants in nations that could not otherwise afford them.

Of course, the IMF and the World Bank do not always carry out their responsibilities perfectly. The World Bank, in particular, is bloated and inefficient. Some of the projects it funds are wasteful and enrich local klepto-

crats. Critics have long charged that it damages the environment—and the organization has responded by taking much greater notice of the impact its lending has on natural resources. But some environmental degradation is unavoidable, because it's a consequence of *development*; the wealthy, on the whole, consume more than the poor. If the protesters think the environment fares better when you try to develop autonomously, without foreign investment, they should take a look at Communist Russia and China.

The more serious charge is that both organizations dictate harmful policies to their client states. There is some truth in this. Aid packages come with conditions: recipients must privatize inefficient state industries, crack down on corruption, lower tariffs, control budget deficits, and so forth. Generally, this is sound advice, intended to keep loans from sinking into a black hole. On occasion, though, it goes too far, as Joseph Stiglitz argued in these pages ("The Insider," April 17 & 24). During the Asian economic crisis, for instance, the IMF forced its clients to raise interest rates and slash budget deficits during a recession, which deepened the crisis.

But problems like this call for reform, not abolition. The Mobilization for Global Justice, the protest's umbrella organization, urges, "Defund the fund!" and "Break the bank!" It is perverse that the left has come to be identified with such a position. The elimination of agencies that loan money to poor countries at below-market rates would hardly make globalization disappear; it would make it more cruel and would leave developing nations more dependent on private capital. The enforcement of higher standards for human rights and environmental protection requires stronger international institutions, not weaker ones. We can see why elimination of the IMF and World Bank—and the sink-or-swim international economy this would bring about—appeals to free-market absolutists. But how on earth did it become the orthodoxy of the left? ■

WHEN IT RAINS: The TV networks' treatment of the World Bank-International Monetary Fund demonstrations last weekend bore a striking resemblance to coverage of extreme weather—and not just because of the steady rain that drenched the participants. Both were treated as spectacular, but meaningless, forces of nature. The pre-protest stories echoed the obsessive tracking of storm fronts, with images of police arraying themselves in riot gear resembling the pictures of beach-house owners boarding up windows. When the protesters finally arrived, there was the block-by-block accounting of police-versus-protester confrontations, like those scenes of a twister tearing through the neat streets of a Midwestern town. Then came the solemn pronouncements by public officials, who insisted that public order would be maintained and encouraged residents to stay indoors, if possible. Missing from the coverage, of course, was any real discussion of the issues behind the demonstrations themselves. Sure, images of young anarchists linking arms makes for sexier television than discussions of the intricacies of Third World debt. But one might have hoped for at least some substantive coverage from the vaunted Sunday-morning talk shows. Instead, on NBC's "Meet the Press," Tim Russert, taking a break from Elián González questions, asked White House Chief of Staff John Podesta whether he thought the demonstrators would shut down Washington, D.C.; the administration's position on IMF reform was entirely ignored. CNN's "Late Edition" played a clip of D.C. police chief Charles Ramsey talking about his force's preparations. That was it. On CBS's "Face the Nation," Washington Mayor Anthony Williams, the show's only IMF-meeting-related guest, was asked what toll the protests would take on his city. ABC's "This Week" did the best, hosting Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers. But even the best wasn't very good: Cokie Roberts asked Summers only about the stock-market crash, with nary a question devoted to America's view on the World Bank or the IMF. To be sure, the protests themselves often seemed almost as vacuous, with the demonstrators more interested in organizational tactics than in policy details. But, with press coverage like this, who can blame them? If the news shows hadn't seemed so satisfied with images of barricades and black-masked youths, maybe the protesters would have felt a little more pressure to figure out exactly what they were fighting for.

CLUBBY: We weren't surprised when the *National Review* took issue with John B. Judis's recent article on conservative Republicans' attempts to purge moderates from the GOP ("The Hunted," April 17 & 24), blasting it as

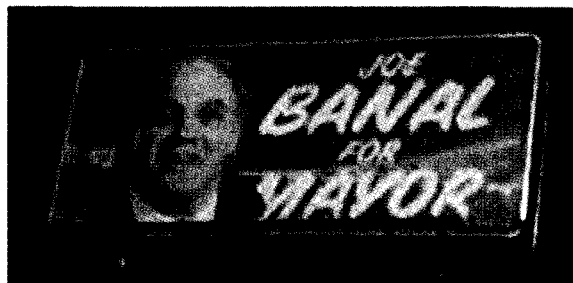
"misleading" and accusing Judis of "stack[ing] the deck." After all, Judis's thesis—that the purging of those moderates, through contested Republican primaries, will benefit only Democrats in the general elections—is anathema to *NR*, a magazine beholden to the idea that moderates sully the GOP. But in its criticism of Judis's piece, written by *NR* senior editor Ramesh Ponnuru and posted on the magazine's website, *NR* doesn't let on just how beholden. Judis's article pays particular attention to a conservative group called the Club for Growth and its financing of a right-wing primary challenge to moderate Republican Representative Marge Roukema of New Jersey. Nowhere in his attack on Judis, however, does Ponnuru mention that *NR*'s president, Thomas L. Rhodes, and *NR* contributing editor

Stephen Moore are two of the three members of the club's board of directors. Nor does Ponnuru mention that Lawrence Kudlow, another *NR* contributing editor, serves on the Club for Growth's founders committee. Misleading and stacking the deck, indeed.

IN PLANE VIEW: Last week's White House meeting between President Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak was supposed to be about

the peace process. But, while he had Barak's attention, Clinton raised another issue that has recently been cramping U.S.-Israeli relations: something called the Phalcon, an Israeli-designed high-tech radar system that the Israelis have fitted onto Russian military planes. What bothers Clinton is that in 1996 Israel agreed to sell up to eight of these specially outfitted planes to China for about \$2 billion. We're bothered, too. The fear among Pentagon officials—who have voiced their concern to Clinton—is that the Chinese will use the plane's advanced airborne-warning technology for surveillance against Taiwan, and that they could even use it against U.S. troops one day. As one Pentagon official put it to reporters last week, "We have an interest in a safe, secure region, and we're concerned this could come back and haunt us." Israeli officials, while mindful of the \$3 billion the country receives each year in aid from the United States, seem intent on completing the sale lest they anger the Chinese. "From our perspective, it's very important that China be a force for stability in the Middle East and a force that supports the peace process," says Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington. "It would indeed be undesirable to alienate China and to push her toward the rogue states in the region." Problem is, there's no reason to believe that selling Israeli weaponry to China will have any effect whatsoever on Beijing's relationship with rogue states. After all, this is the same government that has sold its military technology to sworn enemies of Israel, like

AN AVERAGE JOE



—billboard in Wheeling, West Virginia
(Thanks to George G. Polak, Centerville, Ohio.)

Iran. Who's to say the designs for the Phalcon's radar system won't end up in Tehran as well? So why is Jerusalem so hot for the deal? Perhaps because Israel's ailing defense industry has lobbied strenuously for it. We know Israel has been copying many features of the American political system in recent years, but did foreign policy by defense contractor have to be one of them?

BLURRED VISION: The verbal bouquets from Western leaders to newly elected Russian President Vladimir Putin keep piling up. President Clinton has described Putin as "highly intelligent and highly motivated" and someone "the United States can do business with." French President Jacques Chirac went so far as to put "brilliant" and "Vladimir Putin" in the same sentence. As for Putin's desire to lay waste to Chechnya, Western leaders largely dismiss it as an aberration or, at worst, an overreaction to the nettlesome problem of dealing with, as Clinton described them, "terrorists and separatists." British Prime Minister Tony

Blair even said that "his [Putin's] vision of the future is one that we would feel comfortable with." But what about his vision of the past? On April 12, Putin granted Russian citizenship to a Latvian man named Vasily Kononov, a day before the Latvian Supreme Court was to hear Kononov's appeal of a war-crimes conviction that carried a six-year prison sentence. The conviction had been handed down by a lower court in January for Kononov's role, as part of a 17-member Soviet detachment, in killing six policemen and three women in the Latvian village of Malye Baty on May 27, 1944. Regardless of what the Supreme Court eventually rules, Putin's decision has pretty much rendered due process irrelevant. If the conviction is upheld, Kononov could simply embrace his new Russian citizenship and be extradited to Russia, thereby avoiding his six-year prison term. Putin justifies his meddling by declaring that Russia "shall protect all soldiers of the Great Patriotic War, no matter where they live." The more honest formulation would have been "no matter what they have done." ■

V I N T ' S W E E K



The end of a newspaper. Forward Halt

By JONATHAN MAHLER

I AM NOT bitter, but I am defeated,” my friend and former boss Seth Lipsky said when he told me, a few weeks back, that he was being ousted as editor of the *Forward*. I was sure he was exaggerating. After all, the *Forward* is always in the throes of some crisis; when Lipsky offered me its Washington posting five years ago, he warned me that the paper could fold the next day. But this time Lipsky meant it. The board of the Forward Association, which owns half of the paper, had informed Lipsky and his financial partners that if they didn’t sell their stake in the *Forward* back to the association, it would stop publishing the paper. Presumably, the association members knew they’d never get a majority of the editorial board to vote Lipsky out, so they resorted to a tactic more appropriate to Tammany Hall than to this venerable institution, one of the great defenders of democracy in twentieth-century America.

The association said Lipsky was too conservative—an unfit heir to Abraham Cahan, the founding editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward* (the Yiddish forebear of the English-language edition). Lipsky, they claimed, had betrayed Cahan’s legacy by abandoning the paper’s social democratic ideals. He was not, as Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg put it to *The New York Times*—apparently without a trace of irony—“staunchly for the welfare state.”

Lipsky could have refused to leave, forcing the association to pull the plug. But he had too much respect for the paper’s history to do that. In other words, the man denounced as an ideological impostor was the only one willing to walk away from the newspaper in order to save it.

But it’s already beyond saving. No newspaperman with a shred of self-respect will take Lipsky’s job. The Forward Association has not simply forced out the *Forward*’s editor; it has fired the paper’s founder and animating spirit. Lipsky has insisted to his staff that the association deserves equal credit for the paper’s achievements. But he is wrong. Seth Lipsky arrived at a desert and built a beautiful garden. Now the land’s owners want it back. What they don’t realize is that, without Lipsky, the garden will die anyway.

THE JEWISH DAILY FORWARD was founded in 1897 to give voice to the Jewish immigrants then streaming into the United States from Eastern Europe. It was one of the first papers to sound the alarm about American inaction in the face of German fascism. It identified, early on, the threat to liberty posed by communism, and it became an uncompromising

supporter of the idea of a Jewish state. On the home front, it fought tirelessly for the working class and proudly allied itself with the labor movement.

The paper had another mission, too: to help Jewish immigrants assimilate into American society. And here it might have done its job a little too well, for by the time Lipsky first dreamed of creating an English-language version of the paper, in 1980, the circulation of the Yiddish edition had dwindled to below 20,000. Lipsky was then a member of *The Wall Street Journal*’s editorial board and was eyed suspiciously when he approached the social democrats who controlled the Forward Association. It took him seven years to persuade them to let him start an English-language edition.

But, when he finally did, the result was extraordinary. The *Forward* consistently broke national news stories and dared to cover the country’s Jewish leadership with the sort of rigor that is anathema to the dozens of Jewish weeklies in the pocket of their principal benefactor, the UJA-Federation. The *Forward*’s arts section rippled with sophisticated features and reviews, and not only of the latest Holocaust memoir. Here was proof that the doomsayers of assimilation were wrong: not only was Jewish culture still thriving in America, there was a growing hunger to read about it.

BUT, MORE THAN that, the newspaper was painstakingly faithful to Cahan’s ideals. Lipsky was always bounding around the newsroom with freshly translated editorials from the Yiddish paper. Whenever one of his reporters wrote about a subject that touched on a concern of the old *Forward*, Lipsky would insist he find out the old paper’s position. When Lipsky interpreted the paper’s ideological tradition differently from the members of the Forward Association, his solution was simple: Write up your dissent and I’ll run it.

Lipsky doesn’t take offense when he is labeled neo-conservative, but the charge is inaccurate. He endorsed Clinton twice and opposed the very existence of an independent counsel. He is pro-choice and supports gay rights. The only Republican he ever endorsed was New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, and he did so only after the city’s Central Labor Council swung behind him. On Israel, he is for religious pluralism and peace—though he is wary of American arm-twisting, believing these are matters best left to Israel’s voters. And, while Lipsky may not be doctrinaire in his support of the Democratic Party, neither was the *Jewish Daily Forward*. In the 1930s, the paper helped form a new party, the American Labor Party, so that its readers could vote for FDR without having to support New York’s corrupt Democrats.

Indeed, there is an interesting precedent for all this. Cahan left the editorship of the *Jewish Daily Forward* in 1897, less than a year after he founded it, because the paper’s owners were unwilling to declare its independence from the Socialist Party. Five years later, the association promised that independence and asked Cahan to return. If the Forward Association truly cares about communicating its ideals to a new generation, they won’t wait five years to bring Lipsky back. Because, by then, the Lipsky-less English-language *Forward* will have been reduced to little more than an embarrassing footnote to an awe-inspiring story. ■

JONATHAN MAHLER, a senior editor and writer at *Talk* magazine, is the former editorial-page editor of the *Forward*.

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Campaign Journal

Goredom

By MICHELLE COTTLE

SEEING THE PRESS release almost made me want to cry. It was just lying there next to the office fax machine, cast aside by some overworked intern. The logo in the top left corner was familiar: "Judicial Watch: Because no one is above the law." During my three years in Washington, I have received approximately 976 faxes from Judicial Watch, each one detailing some new Clinton-administration atrocity. But, looking at the April 3 release—"Clinton Pulls Legal Stunt in Willey Privacy Act Matter"—I realized that an era is about to end.

Poor Larry Klayman. For six years, his conservative legal foundation has spent thousands of dollars and mountains of energy suing pretty much everyone in Washington (this magazine included) in an attempt to expose the high crimes that, he is convinced, occur almost hourly in the Clinton White House. Yet Bill Clinton has survived—even triumphed. And, when he crosses the finish line next January, Klayman's *raison d'être* will suddenly vanish, along with that of thousands of Americans (mostly conservatives) whose lives have come to be defined by their intense loathing of the president.

I worry about these fellow citizens of mine. I worry because I know that, even in the best of circumstances, their post-Clinton lives will be hard. The best-case scenario is that Al Gore wins the presidency. Already the Clinton haters are gamely trying to transfer their fury to the vice president. But the going is tough. Gore doesn't have as much baggage as his boss. What's more, he's not a political genius—and normal, clumsy politicians, it turns out, are a lot harder to hate.

To be sure, Gore has had his problems with scandal at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, but there's not as much for his enemies to chew on,

largely because he doesn't have Clinton's pre-White House history. Clinton was a product of the Arkansas political backwater; on his way to the presidency, he involved himself in all sorts of questionable relationships—political, financial, and, well, you know—that have given scandalmongers juicy, and potentially litigious, fodder. "Back in '92, I got a call from somebody who worked in one of the Arkansas agencies," Clinton hater Reed Irvine, head of the conservative watchdog group Accuracy in Media, recalls wistfully. "He compared it to a banana republic, saying, 'You can get away with anything.' And Clinton was getting away with anything and everything." This president's scandals have been like those of "a Guatemalan tin-pot dictator," adds R. Emmett Tyrrell, editor of the ultraconservative *American Spectator* and premier Clinton hater.

Gore, by contrast, came to Washington, D.C., via Washington, D.C., with a brief detour to the equally colorless Harvard Yard. This doesn't mean he's above political misbehavior. But he's more likely to commit the kinds of misdeeds that barely raise eyebrows inside the Beltway. Overzealous fund-raising, association with shady financiers, taking positions of political convenience—you could hurl those charges at just about any elected official in Washington. Faced with Goredom,

Klayman puts on a brave face: "The election of Al Gore, for those interested in scandal, would be a dream come true." But you can hear the concern in his voice. He acknowledges that most of Gore's troubles will be of the standard "financially related" variety. Bottom line, he says, "I don't think Gore is capable of almost anything like Clinton is."

Even the vice president's much-mocked penchant for exaggeration leaves Clinton haters yawning. Compared to the president's truth-twisting, Gore's fibs merit only perfunctory condemnation—if that. "Clinton lies without shame," says Irvine, "while Gore seems to lie without knowing that he's lying." Tyrrell goes further, offering a somewhat exculpatory explanation: Gore's lying is part of the "megalomaniac" that characterizes all baby-boomers. As Tyrrell explains, this group was "told it was the most idealistic and intelligent generation in American



history—and it believed it!” As a result, says Tyrrell, these folks tend to suffer from delusions of grandeur. So many of Gore’s lies, he chuckles, are “these 1960s boomer lies about their greatness.” In other words, the vice president is no worse than everybody else in his sick, twisted age cohort.

But there’s another reason why the scandal chasers can’t muster the same hatred for Gore—and why, even if they did, the attacks probably wouldn’t go too far: it’s not politically necessary. Clinton’s enemies are convinced he’s a figure of preternatural evil in part because of his preternatural ability to escape punishment. Time and again, Clinton’s adversaries thought they had him where they wanted him, only to see him turn the tables and emerge victorious. It happened after 1994, when the wildly overconfident Republican majority shut down the government, only to be outmaneuvered by the White House—and then clobbered at the polls in 1996. And it happened again during the Ken Starr investigation: the greater the evidence of the president’s wrongdoing, the higher he climbed in the polls, and the lower his accusers fell.

To his enemies, Clinton’s political immortality is proof of his evil genius: he is “a sociopath,” says Tyrrell, with “no sense of right and wrong—no sense of a reality outside himself.” Nobody hurls such accusations at Gore. He’s too bland to be pathological, too transparent to be diabolical, and, most obviously, too vulnerable to be immortal. From day one, his public-approval ratings have been surprisingly low for the vice president of an administration presiding over such prosperity. Even today, Clinton’s job-approval ratings are ten points higher than Gore’s.

And, unlike Clinton, Gore hasn’t surrounded himself with fanatic loyalists willing to endlessly counterpunch his critics. There’s no Sidney Blumenthal or Joe Conason or James Carville to throw barbs back at Klayman, Tyrrell, and Irvine. And, with nobody to tussle with, what fun is the fight? “A lot of people dislike him [Gore] because they think he’s a phony, they think he’s been two-faced on a number of issues, they think he’s flip-flopped, or they think he tends to be hectoring and condescending ... but that’s an entirely different feeling from the sort of intense, passionate hatred that Clinton inspires in some people,” says former ABC correspondent Bob Zelnick, whose biography of the vice president, *Gore: A Political Life*, was published last year by the conservative Regnery press. “I think the other side of that,” he adds, “is that Gore does not inspire the kind of personal devotion that many feel toward Clinton. I think Gore strikes many people as a political vehicle to achieve their policy goals, but I don’t think there’s the kind of emotional attachment to Gore that you find among many people who really like Clinton.” He’s right. Gore’s lack of charisma and his inability to connect with voters were supposed to be liabilities. But, when it comes to defanging the Clinton haters, they’re enormous assets.

So I fear that today’s Clinton haters will soon find themselves wandering in the political wilderness, cut off from the North Star that has guided them for so long, desperate for a target sufficiently powerful to offer them a new identity. But Gore doesn’t shine brightly enough. So all will be darkness. Unless, unless ... what about that nasty little Senate race going on in New York? ■

Raleigh Dispatch

Laughter and Forgetting

By JASON ZENGERLE

“IT’S JUST LIKE old times!” one man exclaimed as he greeted Marion Barry at last weekend’s conference commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

And in many ways it really was like old times. There was Barry—who, 40 years ago, right here at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, was elected SNCC’s first chairman. There was James Forman—SNCC’s former executive secretary and author of the book *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*—handing out materials stuffed in envelopes marked “URGENT.” And there was Bob Zellner—son of an Alabama Klansman, who nonetheless became one of SNCC’s first white members and who today harbors no bitterness about his 1966 expulsion when the group went all-black—showing off a grotesquely misshapen right arm. It was the handiwork, he said, of some cops who recently jumped him.

But, in other ways, it really wasn’t like old times. Forman, a once-strapping man now frighteningly frail due to colon cancer, wasn’t rallying support against segregated public facilities as he did during the ’60s; he was pushing statehood for the District of Columbia. And Zellner, who in 1961 took a nasty beating from a white mob while trying to register black voters in McComb, Mississippi, suffered his current arm injury when he was arrested while protesting a new housing development near the Shinnecock tribal reservation in Southampton, New York.

Indeed, if the SNCC gathering made one thing clear, it was that time seems to have passed many of the civil rights veterans by. In the ’60s, when SNCC—whose members were dubbed the “shock troops” of the civil rights movement—sought to end Jim Crow and win equal rights for African Americans, the group was engaged in the seminal political and moral struggle of its time. But today, nearly 30 years after SNCC splintered apart, the political causes of many of its veterans seem decidedly peripheral. Far from the pictures of strident youth, many SNCC veterans, with gray heads of hair and thick glasses and stooping posture, seemed on their last legs. When the Freedom Singers—the SNCC workers who put the movement to music in the ’60s—reunited to sing the protest song “This May Be the Last Time,” it was particularly poignant. Forty years ago, the SNCC activists changed America, but, today, did they have anything left to give?

They certainly thought they did. Although the gathering had the feeling of a reunion, it was treated as a conference, complete with plenary sessions, panels, and the issuing of official statements (like one offering support to Jamil Abdul-

lah Al-Amin, formerly known as H. Rap Brown, the onetime SNCC chairman recently charged with murdering an Atlanta police officer). And, while much of the conference was spent on historical housekeeping (debating, for instance, whether SNCC had truly advocated violence after Stokely Carmichael unseated John Lewis to become the group's chairman), it was also devoted to looking to the future—and birthing a new movement right then and there.

"Why can't this meeting be the beginning of another SNCC?" implored SNCC veteran Charles Sherrod. And why not? In addition to the scholars and SNCC veterans in attendance, a number of the participants were student activists who, as one explained, were "here to learn from our elders." But the elders seemed stuck in their old battles, convinced as ever that racism underlies all of America's most serious social problems. "One assumption I'd like you to make," the Reverend James Lawson, a Methodist minister who served as spiritual mentor to many of the SNCC activists in the '60s, instructed the students gathered in Raleigh 40 years later, "is that we didn't dismantle racism in the sixties. It's an unfinished task."

At one conference session, a former SNCC member suggested that the best thing young black students today could do was "[g]et your degree ... you step immediately into the middle class ... [and] get with your family, and stay; poverty is a consequence of young black males leaving their families." Lawson erupted: "I protest! I protest! ... This is supposed to be the fortieth anniversary, and SNCC did not begin with that junk!" Lawrence Guyout, a former SNCC member and now a local activist in Washington, D.C., later agreed: "For someone to say that in the name of SNCC is treasonous." A similar exchange took place at another session, according to several attendees. After one young black activist complained that the SNCC veterans were too quick to play, as he put it, the "race card," he was roundly criticized—both by many of the veterans and by many of the younger activists.

Plenty of student activists, black and white, said they took a lot away from the conference—practical advice on how to organize in communities as well as general inspiration. But others wondered if the conference was all that useful. "They have a lot to teach, but I don't feel like I'm learning much from them," lamented one white student. "There seems to be a real disconnect between the stuff they did and the stuff we're doing today." The student ended up leaving the conference for Washington—to join the protests against the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

AND WHAT ABOUT those protests—and, more broadly, the issue of globalization, which seems to be energizing so many student activists today? Aside from a hastily adopted statement in the closing minutes of the conference offering support "to the protests in the District of Columbia in opposition to the WTO" (the statement was subsequently amended to support the protests against the IMF), the issue wasn't on too many people's minds. When I asked Tim Jenkins, a SNCC veteran who's now a lawyer in Washington, why that was, he told me African Americans had too many other pressing concerns. Whites, on the

other hand, "don't have urgent issues, so they can talk about Third World debt and the whales."

Then again, some of the whites at the conference didn't seem too worked up about the whales, either. Shortly after a session at which SNCC veterans related their harrowing tales of being attacked by racist whites during the 1961 Freedom Rides and other protests in the South, I asked a white Duke University student, who was a member of something called the Duke Progressive Alliance, whether he was going to Washington for the IMF protests. "And get shot at with rubber bullets?" he replied. "I know it's important, but I'd rather be here." That didn't sound much like old times at all. ■

W.'s health care plan is conservative, all right. Pool Sharks

By JONATHAN COHN

THE APRIL 11 press release touting George W. Bush's new health care plan promoted it as evidence of the Texas governor's heartfelt commitment to helping "families caught between poverty and prosperity." But the attached "contact list" hinted at a different sort of commitment. Usually such lists are stocked with think tankers and academics. On this one, four of the five contacts came from two lobbies representing small business: the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB).

This was no fluke. While the debate over Bush's plan has centered on whether its \$40 billion tax break is big enough to help the 44 million Americans without insurance (it isn't), the plan includes two other provisions, tailored to the small-business community, that have largely escaped scrutiny. One would vastly increase the use of Medical Savings Accounts, a reform that the Chamber of Commerce and the NFIB have long championed. The other would pave the way for something called Association Health Plans, which would be created, marketed, and sold to small businesses by—you guessed it—the Chamber of Commerce and the NFIB. Medical Savings Accounts and Association Health Plans are indeed good for small businesses; but they're bad for the uninsured. They might even worsen America's health care crisis. That Bush would make them centerpieces of his reform suggests that he is in the pocket of small-business lobbyists, that he shares their blind devotion to free-market ideology, or both.

In general, the point of health insurance is to get as many people as possible into one pool, mixing the sick and the healthy. The bigger and more diverse the pool, the more diluted the cost of insurance for the sick becomes. Healthy people pay a little more than they otherwise would, but unhealthy people pay a great deal less. And, since everybody

risks getting sick eventually—if only due to aging—it's a fair deal all around.

But, because the United States doesn't have national health insurance, we don't put everybody into one big insurance pool the way most developed nations do. Various groups must buy insurance on their own, and their ability to obtain affordable coverage depends on their size. Large corporations have enough employees to keep rates low. But when one or two people in a small firm run up big hospital bills, rates for each employee can become prohibitively expensive. During the 1980s, this problem became acute. Subsequent state reforms helped improve the situation but didn't fix it completely. This is one reason more than 60 percent of Americans without health insurance today work for small businesses or have relatives who do.

Proponents of the Bush plan say Association Health Plans—under which a big trade group like the NFIB would offer insurance to its members—will allow small businesses to enjoy, at last, the same economies of scale and bargaining power as big companies. Indeed, John Emling, the federation's legislative director, estimates that Association Health Plans would provide insurance to more than four million of the uninsured. But, in most states, small businesses can already pool their resources and buy insurance, as long as they abide by the state insurance regulations passed during the '80s to avert the risk selection that made health insurance so unaffordable in the first place. Bush would exempt Association Health Plans from those state regulations. And that's the catch.

Some of the regulations require insurance plans to offer basic, minimum benefits, like mental health coverage, to all subscribers; others actually require insurance companies to use money from less expensive customers to help subsidize more expensive ones. Without these regulations, small businesses with healthy employees would indeed see their rates drop. But the rates for small businesses with less-healthy employees would go up. Many would either drop coverage altogether or offer insufficient benefits. Meanwhile, rates for individuals purchasing insurance on their own would rise even higher (further diminishing the impact of Bush's tax credit for individuals who buy insurance), since the premiums from small business currently help subsidize coverage for individuals, as well. When the Congressional Budget Office sized up the idea in January, it concluded that Association Health Plans would add just 330,000 people to the insurance rolls—while *raising* premiums by two percent for small businesses that couldn't participate in the plans.

MEDICAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (MSAs) are similarly flawed. MSA users put aside money, tax-free, to cover their medical bills; at year's end, they get to keep what they haven't spent. (They must also each carry an inexpensive catastrophic plan that would cover costs above a few thousand dollars.)

Proponents of MSAs say the accounts discourage people from spending frivolously on health care, thus holding down costs and making insurance more affordable. In reality, MSAs simply allow people who expect to be healthy to opt

out of larger insurance pools. Small businesses like the accounts because they transfer the onus for medical coverage more squarely onto individuals. But most experts who have looked at MSAs have concluded that, by further segregating healthy and sick in the health care market, they make it tougher for people likely to incur high health care bills to get insurance.

The Bush campaign doesn't deny this; in fact, it presents it as a virtue. Bush brags that his plan "will promote individual choice" rather than "nationalize" health care. He may honestly believe that the best way to solve the health insurance crisis is by empowering individuals and then letting the free market do its work. But, strange as it may sound, health care is one area of life where too much individual empowerment can be a bad thing. Left to navigate the insurance market without the protection of government regulation, the people who most need health insurance won't get it. Small business does have a problem, but the solution is a national health insurance scheme that puts employees of small businesses, along with everybody else, into one giant pool with equal rates for all. Conservatives, who instinctively believe the free market can cure almost every social problem, have a hard time accepting this. And that's why, at least on this issue, they're incapable of being "compassionate," too. ■

Preparing for cyberterrorism—badly. Screen Saver

By JOHN ARQUILLA

THE DECISION TO send American troops was easy. Sure, the Saudi demonstrators and rioters wanted democracy, but we couldn't sell out our old ally King Fahd. And what if the insurgents were Iranian pawns? There was too much oil at stake to take a chance.

But something funny happened on the way to the counter-revolution. An unknown fundamentalist group, the Campaign for Islamic Democracy (CID), warned that if we didn't butt out, it would wield the "Secret Sword of Allah." We laughed. Then the CID unsheathed its "cybersword." The attack began with rolling power outages throughout the United States. Next, an automated pipeline control near Valdez, Alaska, was manipulated to lower the temperature of the flowing oil, causing congealment, a burst pipe, and an environmental disaster.

The fundamentalists said they would stop messing with our computers if we stayed out of Saudi affairs. Furious, we continued deployment and stepped up our efforts to find

JOHN ARQUILLA is professor of defense analysis at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School and a consultant to the information studies group at RAND.

them. The CID took it up a notch, too; the group hit our air-traffic-control system. Result: one midair collision over Los Angeles International Airport and several near misses. It was time to cut a deal, even if meant abandoning the king.

Of course, none of this happened. But a group of us at RAND in the early '90s started worrying that it might. So we dreamed up a scenario quite like this one and convinced the deputy secretary of defense to pull together some high-level political and military officials to treat it as a war game. They played it out over a long Saturday—and found themselves at a complete loss.

That was five years ago. Today, we're as open to attack as we were then. American prosperity and security increasingly depend on an extremely vulnerable information infrastructure. And, while the military has all sorts of systems to keep its communications up even during a nuclear war, *civilian* systems—power supplies, transportation, resource flows, and financial markets—are wide open to “cybotage” of the kind we imagined. It's not that the U.S. government hasn't done anything to try to protect us over the last half-decade. It just hasn't done the right things.

Cyberwar means disrupting the flow of information—principally through computer viruses that eat data or freeze up systems and logic bombs that force machines to try to do something they can't (like resolve the value of pi, a trick Mr. Spock once used to disable a computer on “Star Trek”).

Cyberwarfare can be used by one military against another. In the Gulf war, for example, the United States implanted viruses and made other computer intrusions into Iraqi air defenses. Against Serbia, we went further—instead of simply slowing or stopping data flows, we strove to distort the information Serb gunners saw on their screens, helping keep our planes safe during their bombing runs. Since the U.S. military already does a good job of protecting its systems against such attacks—and since the only other power seriously pursuing battlefield cyberwar capacity, China, is way behind us—there's no reason for alarm on this front. At least not right now.

America's civilian computers are another story—they're much more vulnerable to attack. And it wouldn't take an army to launch one, just a small organization, or even a knowledgeable individual. Sound far-fetched? Tell that to the system administrators at Amazon.com, eBay, and Yahoo!, who saw their sites downed by simple, though well-tooled, attacks.

It's true that the talent needed to wage cyberwar is rela-

tively hard to develop. Terrorists don't yet have it. And, while some hackers do, they have not yet shown an interest in cyberterrorism—perhaps because there are ample opportunities to apply those skills for legitimate profit. (Why destroy the U.S. information infrastructure when you can make \$100 million as part of it?) But this is bound to change.

For one thing, as knowledge about the Internet increases, the line between terrorist and hacker may blur. Terrorists' initial forays have been defensive—for example, acquiring encryption technology in order to keep their communications secret. But they won't stay defensive forever. There is even anecdotal evidence that Bulgarian hackers (I kid you not), cut off by the Russians and feared and rejected by the West because they spawned the “Michelangelo” virus some years back, may be trying to hire themselves out as cybermercenaries.

But trying to prevent terrorists from becoming cyberterrorists doesn't much interest the U.S. government. Instead, U.S. computer-protection efforts focus on “infrastructure.” This is what the respected Presidential Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection recommended two and a half years ago; so did the equally prestigious National Research Council. Now there's even a National Infrastructure Protection Center in Washington, D.C.—which involves considerable collaboration between the Departments of Justice and Defense—in charge of the effort.

The trouble with infrastructure protection is that it misunderstands the cyberwar threat. The guiding notion behind nearly all current efforts is to prevent an “electronic Pearl Harbor”—a massive cyberattack that would cripple our ability to deploy our forces. The allusion is sexy but misleading, because nowhere is American power as concentrated today as it was at Battleship Row in 1941. A better analogy is the “harbor lights” phenomenon that bedeviled American efforts to protect merchant ships in the early months of 1942. Big-city mayors on the Eastern seaboard fought to keep their cities from being blacked out, because the cost to business would be high. So, for some months, U-boat skippers had their targets illuminated by well-lit skylines. Today, similarly, harbor lights are on all over cyberspace.

In response, the government has constructed a kind of Maginot Line. It has tried to build leakproof firewalls and safe areas—that is, domains protected by computer protocols and codes—that presumably will prevent hackers from accessing sensitive information and systems. Both the presidential commission and the research-council report strongly



recommended this strategy, and the government is following their advice to the letter. What's more, the government is pushing the private sector to take a similar approach, and many businesses are complying.

But, as the French discovered in 1940, even the best fortifications can be outflanked and penetrated. Cyberterrorists can always find trapdoors and glitches in software that allow them to get around obstacles; or, if that fails, they can try launching direct attacks by using very sophisticated password-cracking programs. This vulnerability was highlighted for me at one Department of Energy laboratory, where I investigated a hack that had shut down the facility for a few weeks in 1998. I learned that the lab's own security people were running a password-cracking program to help assess and limit their risk of intrusion. But, even a year after the initial break-in, their program was still able to guess one in ten new passwords every week.

So what, then, would an effective cyberdefense look like? First, it would abandon the notion that we can simply wall off safe areas, moving instead to a "depth defense" of countermeasures designed to foil intruders once they've broken in. Such countermeasures would include electronic camouflage for files (e.g., making sensitive data look like office-supply orders), the strongest encryption (to keep an intruder from being able to read what he sees), and diffusing that encryption broadly throughout information systems. While some such deceptions are now employed, very strong encryption remains terribly underutilized. This is a pity, since today's best encryption, unlike the mediocre code legally available to the public, simply cannot be broken (for reasons having to do with the length of a code's "key," which can now be measured in thousands of bits).

But something is keeping the best encryption technology from the public: the U.S. government. The Department of Justice argues that strong encryption would let criminals foil its cybertaps. The National Security Agency says it will be crippled if it can't decode communications. And the Department of Commerce fears that diffusing encryption would spawn a "virtual currency," reenergizing and expanding the subterranean economy while undermining America's tax base. But all these objections ignore a critical reality: The best encryption is already in the hands of criminals, terrorists, and the Russians (who will probably sell them to the former). And, by not using our best technology against cyberwar, we only encourage cyberterrorists to develop their emerging capabilities even further.

In addition to freeing up controls on encryption technology, the United States could do one other thing to protect the nation from cyberwar: recruit some hackers to its side. In the same way the United States courted and cultivated German rocket scientists after World War II, the government should bring some of the best cyberminds onto its team—in recognition that, for all the techno-glitz that surrounds cyberwar, human factors still reign supreme. Only the best hackers can tell you for certain whether you've designed a system that is impossible (or at least very difficult) for them to disable. We could buy all the hackers there are for the price of one F-15. And they'd do us a lot more good than an F-15 if we ever came face-to-face with the "Secret Sword of Allah." ■

**Don't end "Miranda."
Mend it.**

Right Should Remain Silent

By JEFFREY ROSEN

THIS WEEK, PAUL CASSELL, a conservative law professor from the University of Utah, asked the Supreme Court to overturn its most famous criminal-procedure decision, *Miranda v. Arizona*. But, while the campaign against *Miranda* comes from the right, the most powerful criticisms of the decision come from the left. It has long been obvious that the system *Miranda* enshrined protects the most sophisticated suspects, who need it least, and does little to stop police from using psychological pressure, lies, and trickery to elicit confessions from less sophisticated suspects. Nevertheless, the Court should decline the invitation to overturn *Miranda*. The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution doesn't protect suspects from being pressured to confess by trickery and deception, but it does protect them from being coerced to confess because of the mistaken belief that they have no right to remain silent. And, by failing to inform suspects of this right, the 1968 law that Cassell is urging on the Court instead of *Miranda* fails to meet the minimal requirements of the Constitution.

As Peter Brooks notes in his new book, *Troubling Confessions*, ever since the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 imposed on the faithful an annual duty to confess, confessions have triggered absolution by the church, not punishment by the state. The exception, however, was inquisitions into heretical beliefs or thought crimes. And these star-chamber investigations—in which suspects were forced to take an oath promising to answer any question that might be put to them about their most intimate thoughts and beliefs—were precisely what the Fifth Amendment was designed to prohibit. In an age that took oaths seriously, it was considered moral torture to confront a suspected heretic with the choice between self-incrimination if he confessed his private thoughts, punishment for contempt if he refused to answer, and eternal damnation if he confessed falsely and committed perjury.

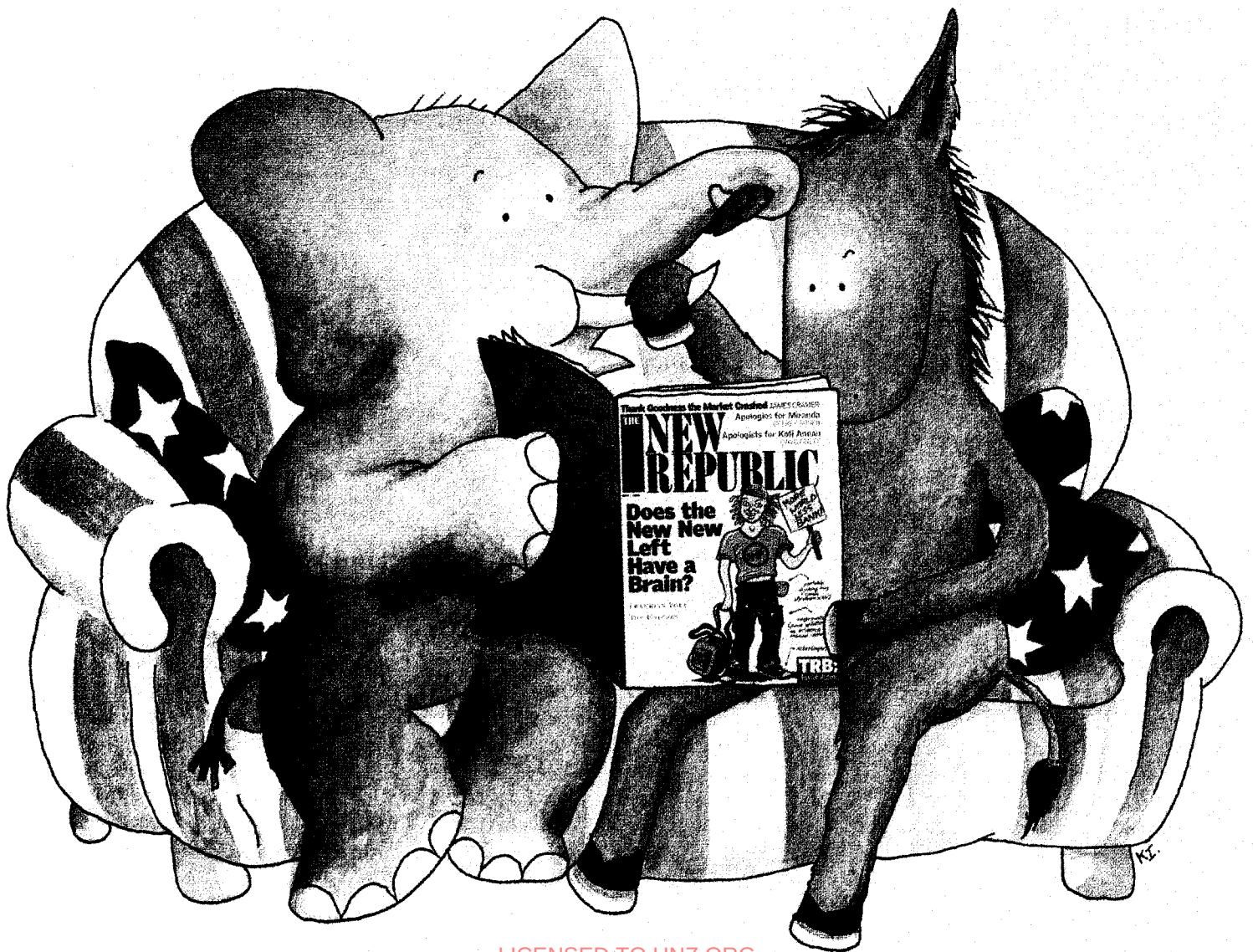
As a result, in America, criminal suspects in police custody are not interrogated under oath. And, although the federal government, like many states, has laws on the books forbidding lying, even while not under oath, to investigating officials, these laws are rarely enforced. Nevertheless, in light of what Chief Justice Warren in *Miranda* called the "inherent pressures of the interrogation atmosphere," some suspects may mistakenly believe that the police will punish them if they refuse to talk—by keeping them incommunicado until they confess or by resorting to the third-degree

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methods that, as any fan of *The Untouchables* will recall, were once common.

Miranda sought to alleviate this particular pressure by requiring that all suspects be told they have the right to remain silent. It was Warren's hope that the warning would ensure that suspects who waive their right to silence make this choice, to use his words in *Miranda*, "knowingly, voluntarily, and intelligently." But, in subsequent cases, the Court abandoned this expansive interpretation of the right not to incriminate oneself. Rather than a right not to be duped into confessing, the Court came to see the Fifth Amendment as a right not to be compelled to confess. Thus, after reciting the warnings, interrogators are free to use whatever psychological pressures they please to fool suspects into waiving their rights. This can range from informing a suspect, correctly, that the court will treat him more leniently if he pleads guilty, to lying to a suspect by saying, for example, that a co-conspirator has turned against him. Either way, under *Miranda*, a suspect who confesses after being warned is presumed to have confessed voluntarily, even if he has confessed against his interest as a result of his own foolishness or the police's deception. This is why many police prefer *Miranda* to real oversight of their secret interrogations, such as videotaping.

MIRANDA HAS NOT proved a major hindrance to police interrogators. Between 80 and 90 percent of all suspects waive their *Miranda* rights, and more than 90 percent of all felony convictions in America result from guilty pleas, either by confession or plea bargain. In short, *Miranda* has failed to achieve its original goal—allowing suspects to protect themselves against coercive police interrogation by cutting off questioning after it has started. As William Stuntz of the University of Virginia has shown, suspects almost never stop talking once they have begun.

In fact, the practical effects of *Miranda* stem not from its first set of warnings—"You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law"—but from subsequent interpretations of its second set: "You have the right to consult with a lawyer.... If you cannot afford a lawyer, one will be appointed for you." In the case of *Edwards v. Arizona*, decided in 1981, the Supreme Court ruled that when a suspect says the magic words—"I want a lawyer"—interrogation must stop and cannot resume unless the suspect initiates the conversation. As a result, the first lesson that students of criminal procedure learn is that if you're suspected of a crime, whether you're innocent or guilty, you should resist the impulse to tell your side of the story and instead call Alan Dershowitz immediately. Sophisticated white-collar suspects—who make up a large proportion of federal criminal defendants—know this; whether or not they are read their rights, savvy suspects will demand a lawyer and say no more. But, as Stuntz argues, these suspects are not protecting themselves against police coercion; they are manipulating the system to their own advantage.

In the case now before the Supreme Court, *Dickerson v. United States*, Paul Cassell has resurrected a law that Con-

gress passed in 1968 to overturn *Miranda* but that has been ignored for more than three decades because Republicans and Democrats questioned its constitutionality. In *Miranda*, Chief Justice Warren stressed that although the precise words of the *Miranda* warnings aren't constitutionally required, some form of warning is. Congress and the states are free to develop other safeguards against self-incrimination, Warren held, as long as these alternatives are "fully as effective as those described above in informing accused persons of their right of silence and in affording a continuous opportunity to exercise it." Because the alternative Congress passed in 1968 contains no requirement that suspects be notified of their right of silence, the Supreme Court can't uphold it without overruling *Miranda*.

BUT SHOULD *MIRANDA*, with all its problems, be overruled? The 1968 statute would return the law to its pre-*Miranda* state—by making the "voluntariness" of a confession the test of its admissibility. Voluntariness is to be judged by a series of amorphous factors, including whether or not the *Miranda* warnings were given. But voluntariness is a difficult standard for judges to apply, because, as courts discovered in the years leading up to *Miranda*, no one can agree on what it means to confess voluntarily. In an opinion written five years before *Miranda*, Justice Felix Frankfurter struggled to distinguish confessions "naturally born of remorse" from those produced by "an overborne will," in which "the suction process" has drained the prisoner's "capacity for freedom of choice." But Frankfurter's high standard—that confessions must be "the product of an essentially free and unconstrained choice"—proved notoriously hard to apply. Except in the rare case of a suspect who walks into the police station and confesses because he wants to expunge his guilt, confessions are always produced under circumstances designed to constrain a suspect's free choice and to induce him into acting against his best interests by speaking instead of hiring a lawyer to speak for him.

As a practical matter, Frankfurter and other judges disagreed about how much pressure was undue pressure, because it was so hard to balance the relevant factors that might constrain rational choice, including the age and mental ability of the suspect, the length of the investigation, the aggressiveness of the police duplicity, and so forth. For this reason, Justice Hugo Black, at the *Miranda* oral argument, announced, "If you are going to determine the admissibility of a confession each time on the circumstances ... if the Court will take them one by one ... it is more than we are capable of doing."

Miranda deftly short-circuited the legal, philosophical, and psychological debates about voluntariness, and this should weigh heavily on the swing Supreme Court justices, Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy, who appear uncertain about whether or not to overturn it. In *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* in 1992, O'Connor and Kennedy announced that they would uphold the core of *Roe v. Wade*, even though they may have disagreed with it when it was first decided, because Americans had come to rely on the right recognized in *Roe*, and nothing about the right had

become unworkable in light of subsequent changes in society. In *Miranda*, the case for adherence to precedent is even stronger: thanks to television, there is no other right that has generated such widespread expectations. Thus, overturning *Miranda* would provoke chaos and confusion, as states struggled to adopt a host of inconsistent standards and judges struggled to apply them.

This doesn't mean, however, that *Miranda* is the best or the only way of regulating custodial interrogation. If the Supreme Court upholds it, Congress and the states could consider more effective ways of balancing the needs of the police against the rights of suspects. Any constitutionally permissible alternative would have to inform suspects that they have the right to remain silent. But it might not have to include the second and more significant part of the *Miranda* warnings: informing suspects they have the right to have a lawyer present during interrogation. Indeed, as Stuntz suggests, Congress and the states might plausibly pass laws giving police the right to interrogate a suspect without a lawyer for a reasonable period of time—say, twelve hours. If a suspect asked for counsel, the interrogation wouldn't automatically cease, as it does under current law, although repeated requests for counsel might have to be respected. To regulate and deter overbearing police conduct, the entire interroga-

tion could be videotaped.

A compromise like this might come close to satisfying *Miranda*'s critics. In his Supreme Court brief, Cassell has chosen not to emphasize his original (and hotly disputed) claim that after *Miranda*, the nationwide confession rate fell by about 16 percentage points; now Cassell argues that even if *Miranda* were overturned, the police would and should continue giving *Miranda* warnings anyway, just to be safe. The real benefit of overturning *Miranda*, Cassell claims, would be to allow police more leeway to question suspects without lawyers. But Congress and the states may have this power anyway, even if the Supreme Court reaffirms the core of *Miranda*.

A system in which police could question suspects without lawyers would, of course, bring us even further from the ideal that Warren embraced—namely, that the decision to confess should be made “voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently.” The only way of achieving that ideal would be to put a Dershowitz in every interrogation room. But as long as our legal system, like our culture, continues to rely on public confessions, perhaps we should inform suspects of their right to silence in a way that gives police more discretion, not less, in pressuring suspects to act against their own best interests. After all, as Peter Brooks notes, “It may be that the only true confessions are involuntary.” ■

Meet the New New Left: bold, fun, and stupid.

Protest Too Much

By FRANKLIN FOER

A WOMAN DRESSED AS a lamb stands atop a pile of debris, chanting into a bullhorn, “This is what anarchy looks like! This is what anarchy looks like!” She has a point. Everywhere you looked at last week's World Bank-International Monetary Fund protest there were anarchists. Thirty members of the Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc, an anarchist cell, hurled pylons from a construction site onto the street. Three topless women in gas masks paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue with Magic Marker slogans on their backs urging protesters, SMASH THE STATE. An anarchist pom-pom girl in a yellow sweater with an “A” tacked onto it danced in front of the Treasury Department. The small groups that wreaked havoc around Farragut and McPherson Squares were largely modeled on the anarchist brigades of the Spanish Civil War.

Welcome to the New New Left. For close to a decade now, commentators have wondered what would define the post-cold-war generation of student activists. For a while, the answer was identity politics. But the movement for ethnic studies, affirmative action, sensitivity training, and speech codes lost steam years ago. Anarchism has filled the gap. In the last few years, anarchists have helped launch flashy

websites and a slew of organizations that go by menacing names like Direct Action Network and the Ruckus Society. They have started anarchist soccer leagues and held an “Alternative Spring Break” in Florida, where students got to practice hurling banners off 60-foot structures. The Seattle and Washington, D.C., protests were their coming-out parties.

Why anarchism—a movement with deep roots in Italy and Spain but not in the United States? One reason, of course, is the demise of its competitors. The old socialist parties that used to haunt college campuses have fallen on hard times. Their long-standing advantage over anarchists—the existence of real-world Communist and socialist experiments—has been rendered a liability by the collapse of communism and the demise of leftist governments in Western Europe. At least anarchism hasn't had a chance to fail. And, if communism doesn't have anything new to say about the manic global capitalism of the 1990s, identity politics doesn't have anything to say at all; in fact, corporations long ago turned multiculturalism into just another marketing tool. (One result of the shift from identity politics to anarchism has been to make the activist left much more white; according to *The Wall Street Journal*, World Bank-IMF protesters even hired orga-

nizers to recruit African Americans, but it didn't work.)

But anarchism is more than just a fallback ideology—it suits the moment. In fact, globalization's most vociferous critics share important assumptions with its biggest boosters. Like the Silicon Valley CEOs they disdain, the anarchists complain about overbearing government and champion decentralization. Like House Majority Leader Dick Arney and his libertarian cronies, they seethe with hostility toward the IMF and many of the other institutions that regulate the world economy.

And, most important of all, they've absorbed the central lesson of the consumerist ethic they claim to loathe: Pleasure sells. Socialist protests usually involve newspapers, leaflets, and convoluted sectarian squabbles. (Indeed, the only people I saw hawking reading material at the D.C. protests were members of the International Socialist Organization.) The World Bank-IMF demonstrations, by contrast, featured anarchist puppeteers, the Anarchist Marching Band, and the anarchist-aligned Radical Cheerleaders. On 15th Street, I kicked a soccer ball around with a guy in a black bandanna. On 18th Street, I watched a Buddhist circle dance, while bystanders were encouraged to take a turn beating the communal drum.

The protests felt like a carnival. And therein lies the New New Left's big success—and its big problem. The anarchists have done something no one has done in ages: They've made the left fun. They've done it by prioritizing action over theory—letting a thousand flowers bloom rather than looking for ideological coherence. But, in so doing, they've also made the left quite, well, stupid. Protest slogans are always dumb, but last week's slogans—"Spank the bank," "We want puppets, not a puppet government"—were almost entirely meaningless. When I asked anarchist protesters to define their ideology, they responded, nearly universally, that anarchism is socialism without the state. But that raises more questions than it answers, questions about which the New New Left couldn't care less. Unlike its 1960s predecessors, whose leaders devoured Marcuse and Mills, the New New Left has little patience for theory. Read a copy of *Z* magazine, the anarchist's organ of choice, and you'll find advice about protest tactics—not intellectual ruminations. When I asked protest organizers for a list of books about anarchism, the vast majority were completely flummoxed.

This isn't an accident. Instead of drawing adherents from academia, like the socialists, anarchism has tapped a different vein: the youth culture. Since the 1970s, most anarchists have emerged from the punk-rock milieu, where British groups like the Sex Pistols wrote paeans to the movement. Anarchism's connection to youth culture has kept it hip and current, in contrast to socialism, which often looks nerdy and old-fashioned. But the New New Left has also absorbed part of punk's quest for pure rebellion—a hatred for the establishment too frenzied to worry much about serious alternatives or moral persuasion. And that may well be the New New Left's downfall, for it makes it prone not only to mindlessness but to mindless violence as well.

Nobody at last week's protests better encapsulated the



left's evolution than Dave Solnit. Dressed like a French mime in a green-and-white striped t-shirt, Solnit was spray-painting cloth banners in a Washington alley when I met him. Like many of the posters at the demonstration, his didn't completely make sense. Underneath an image of corn, he stenciled RESIST. A picture of a cat got the slogan RISE UP!

Solnit doesn't say it, but many of his friends claim that he was instrumental in organizing last November's protests in Seattle against the World Trade Organization. Since his days as a teen connoisseur of punk, Solnit has been an activist. He's sat through a thousand meetings and joined dozens of movements. He marched against nukes in the 1980s and the Gulf war in the '90s. But, after protesting the 1996 Democratic National Convention, he and his friends grew increasingly depressed. It wasn't just that their causes weren't going anywhere; pushing for those causes was boring. "Activism was a drag," he told me. "Not very much fun."

Between the identity politics of the '90s and the sectarianism of the dozens of miniscule socialist parties, meetings had become a giant headache. So, like evangelicals after the Scopes trial, Solnit and other activists dropped out of conventional left-wing politics. Along with a bunch of actor and painter friends, he helped start a group called Arts and Revolution. Instead of debating theory or tactics, they built puppets and performed street theater. In part, Solnit and his friends were inspired by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who argued that the left would grow only once it fostered its own subculture. In part, Solnit also borrowed from Madison Avenue. "The idea," he says, "is to make the left seem fun." They were soon drawing huge (by leftist standards) crowds and invitations to appear at rallies across the country.

At about the same time, Solnit and his activist friends developed a serious interest in anarchism. It wasn't a coincidence—both art and anarchism represented attempts to reassert individual identity over mindless allegiance to ethnicity and party. After all, next to the cult of artistic genius, no ideology has a more romantic conception of the individual than anarchism.

Where Solnit led, many have followed. At one end of the anarchist spectrum stand militants like Road Runner Crazy Kravitz and the Black Bloc anarchists. The Black Bloc anarchists dress entirely in black and practice vandalism. Crazy Kravitz, a Black Bloc fellow traveler, wears a puke-green blazer, covers his face with bandannas, and talks about smashing things. "You know why I'm here," he brags to me. "I plan on doin' some damage." His brand of anarchism holds that violence is the only morally acceptable response to the violence inherent in capitalism and private property. At protests, his ilk prance around like a paramilitary unit, throwing projectiles at the cops and kicking over newspaper boxes.

Crazy Kravitz isn't typical; most protesters are what might be called feel-good anarchists. They don't see much point in vandalizing Starbucks. Though they chant about "resistance," they'd rather give a hug than smash a window. They talk endlessly about solidarity and obsessively worry that they might somehow be unconsciously perpetuating evil "power relationships." The problem is that mainstream anar-

chists—in order to avoid sectarian conflict, and as a result of their laissez-faire, decentralized spirit—won't condemn the violence of their bandanna-wearing fellows. They might agree that violence is a problem tactically, but they're too steeped in relativism to condemn fellow protesters and too ignorant of ideology to construct a moral case for nonviolence. In short, they're unable to do what the mainstream labor and civil rights movements did: disavow people who share their enemies but compromise their moral integrity.

It's not just that the anarchists risk alienating mainstream America; they risk alienating their supposed allies. Ralph Nader's globalization guru Lori Wallach and union chief John Sweeney wax eloquent about the new liberal-left coalition that will unite student radicals, consumer advocates, and labor. But the labor-anarchist alliance is as tenuous as any in the history of the American left. For starters, labor

Bangladesh. They're worrying that someday they'll lose their jobs and have to start drinking sludge from 7-Eleven.

The anarchists, like their '60s predecessors, basically represent a revolt of the affluent. They are college students and graduates materially comfortable enough to condemn materialism and narrow self-interest. And, though their message is muddled, it seems to pretty much reprise the message of the '60s: concern for the Third World and loathing of American power. Labor has never had much patience for this sort of global altruism and anti-Americanism. In fact, the AFL-CIO's heyday in the '50s can be attributed, in part, to the fervor of its anti-communism. And the unions never turned against the Vietnam War. Although the labor movement has grown more liberal since then, you can still see streaks of the old militarism in its recent commercials about China, which hint at threats to American national security with ominous images of Chinese soldiers. This kind of thing is completely anathema to the anarchists. There's also tension on another front.

Unions like environmental restrictions that affect the Third World, not restrictions that threaten their jobs. In fact, unions have helped their bosses scuttle the global-warming treaty.

And there's something else the unionists won't like about the anarchists: their proclivity toward violence. While most leftist movements—from SDS to the Weathermen—usually take time to devolve from idealism into violence, anarchism devolves almost immediately. A movement that

doesn't care about ideology can't explain

why violence is wrong. As a group, the protesters in Washington decided not to rat on the violent anarchists to the cops. "Nonviolence is a tactic. We shouldn't impose our tactics on anyone else," a protest organizer named Dianne explained at a meeting. Protesters complain that their image is tarred by the violence of their radical fringe, but it's their fault for refusing to enforce moral standards in their own ranks.

But confronting the problem of violence will require confronting the ethic of unthinking, unbridled action that lies at the movement's core. At last week's rally, I saw a middle-aged man dressed in a tie and blazer crossing in front of a mob of anarchists. Instantly, the group began to hound him. One woman with a shaved head pronounced him an IMF delegate and began yelling in his face. "Racist! Murderer! How can you allow the murder of innocent babies?" Angry protesters linked arms to prevent his escape. As the man pushed his way through, he whimpered, "I'm just an audio-visual technician." As he began to run down 19th Street, a kid in a bandanna chased him away, yelling, "Liar! Liar!" Bystanders were appalled.

It's all fun and games until someone gets hurt. And, sooner or later, it's likely to be the New New Left. ■

A UNIVERSE OF PROTEST



GLENN HEAD

doesn't have much interest in abolishing the World Bank or the IMF. Only two years ago, the AFL-CIO backed an \$18 billion funding increase for the IMF. Labor's sudden embrace of the cause in the past few months feels like a tactical decision from above, not something supported, or even much understood, by the rank and file. Indeed, whenever labor representatives show up at IMF rallies, they switch the topic to something much dearer to their own hearts and bank accounts: permanent normal trading relations with China.

The fault line was on display at my corner Starbucks. To get a morning latte last week, I had to jockey for position with beefy guys with mustaches wearing UAW jackets and Teamsters hats. Of course, these union delegates must realize that each espresso they order is a slap in the face to their anarchist friends, whom they ostensibly came to Washington to join in protest against globalization. To the youthful activists, Starbucks represents all that is evil about globalization: it brews beans picked by exploited workers in the most environmentally destructive manner possible and then resells them at an outrageous price. The unionists, however, seem to feel—as most Americans do—that a \$4 cup of java is a symbol of the good life. When they fret about globalization, they're not worrying about people in

Stanley Kauffmann on Films Out of the Ordinary

IT IS TIME to talk about Danny DeVito. High time. He is one of the three actors—there are only three—in *The Big Kahuna* (Lions Gate), and if we look at the career leading up to his appearance in this offbeat film, plain and clear stands an unusual man.

First, there is the physical aspect. DeVito is just five feet tall, pot-bellied, with features that can best be called friendly. This is hardly the platonic ideal of an important film actor who has played widely varied roles. He began his working life as a barber in New Jersey. What courage, or lunacy, it must have needed for this short Jersey barber to give up a sure living and go to an acting school in New York. Subsequent TV work, principally in “Taxi,” aroused interest in the peppery lilliputian. He entered films around 1970, and in 1975 he repeated in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* the role that he had played on stage. The gates opened. To date, he has appeared in over 50 films, most often in comic roles like the movie star in *Get Shorty*, sometimes in somber roles like the latest one.

Acting was not enough for DeVito: he entered production and direction. He has co-produced over fifteen films, including the current *Erin Brockovich*. He has directed seven pictures, including the anarchic *Throw Momma from the Train* and the would-be anarchic *War of the Roses*. The peak of his directing career so far is *Hoffa*, which he co-produced and in which he played one of his serious roles. *Hoffa*, a deplorably undervalued film, is a vulgar epic, nearly tragic. In the title role Jack Nicholson does some of his most vivid and trenchant acting—can we guess that the director helped? And now DeVito again shows that he is reliably surprising with his performance in *The Big Kahuna*.

In the picture’s slang, “kahuna” means big shot, big cheese. (So the title is tautological.) The screenplay by Roger Rueff is adapted from a play of his and, wisely, he doesn’t try very hard to disguise that fact. The few moments when the film breaks out of the hotel suite where it is set, the few touches of slow motion, seem like hat-tipping to its host, the cinema, just because it’s the polite thing for a guest to

do. Three employees of a huge concern meet at a convention in Wichita, and in the course of a long day and night, they move from the banter that is their natural habitat through several kinds of self-exploration. Everything depends on the character progress, not on any structural fillip.

The director, John Swanbeck, staged the play in its California premiere and now makes his screen debut with it. His chief task was not to keep the film visually attractive, which would have been intrusive, but to make the performances so engaging that the audience would be glad that someone had filmed them. This is the kind of intimate directing, introspective and subtly inflected, at which Mike Nichols and David Mamet are especially adept; chamber-music refinement that gives the dialogue a contrapuntal richness, along with pauses and speed-ups of action that connote states of mind and energy—all of it meant to make us ignore the limits of the story’s space. Whether Swanbeck has studied those or similar directors, I can’t say; but surely he is aware of such work and has grown by it. And the film also grows by Swanbeck’s previous experience with the piece on stage, though none of the current trio was in his theater production.

The thrust of the story is ironic, doubly so. Two experienced salesmen (Kevin Spacey and DeVito) address a much younger, more naïve colleague (Peter Facinelli), intending to wise him up about business procedures at this conference, and it is the younger man who accomplishes something that the two senior people flub. Thus, ironically, naïveté in salesmanship accomplishes more than guile. But some of the audience may feel that, if the film seriously proposes this idea, it is more ironic than it perhaps knows.

Dramaturgically *The Big Kahuna* begins by asking us for confidence, not because it is a filmed play but because its general shape is discernible pretty soon. We sense that it is going to dig beneath the salesmen’s lingo, the convention commonplaces, to personal revelation. We can foretell that, toward the end, the play

will arrive at late-night quasi-Chekhovian quiet scenes of painful disclosure. This happens. Our confidence in the piece comes mainly from interest in how the author will deal with this pattern, the same way that we might want to see how a painter will deal with a familiar subject. Rueff does moderately well. Nothing comes out of these three men that is startling, which is pleasant because there is no reliance on a twist; but Rueff’s perceptions and his writings are good enough—just—to hold us.

Much of the attraction of the original play was, I’d guess, the plumpness of its roles. That is not a negligible factor because good acting chances, like good coloratura chances, can preserve minor works. As proof, the youngest actor, Facinelli, is the weakest: he brings little more to the part than what is said about him, the wet-behind-the-ears quality that turns out to be his best business asset. Beyond that, Facinelli affords small sense of what this young man is or was or will be.

The picture was produced, we are told, through the enthusiasm of Kevin Spacey. His interest pays off in every good sense because he makes the most of his juicy part. All through this relatively compact film (ninety minutes), Spacey certifies that he is a particular jewel. This film was shot between his two sets of appearances as Hickey, the salesman in O’Neill’s *The Iceman Cometh*. The London production of that play had closed, the New York production had not yet opened, and the film was shot in sixteen days. I didn’t see the O’Neill production so I can’t comment on how much or little of Spacey’s Hickey seeped into Rueff. Perhaps (which I doubt) none. More relevant is the fact that, in the film world, Spacey is taking up where Gene Hackman left off: he is becoming the icon of the modern Everyman. He is so skilled and intelligent that he can range widely yet remain prototypical, so that, in any role of real color, he seems to be pressing a charge against our age.

DeVito is not the actor we might expect to see in his part, which is all to the good: because he contrasts with Spacey’s smoothie. As DeVito has sometimes done before, he radiates a concern for living, a hunger to live well, and a constant worry that he is not doing it. The extra reward of his performance is the sheer fact that he is in this picture, that this man who has been building quietly (one can almost say) a long and varied list of accomplishments chose to appear in this non-mainstream film.

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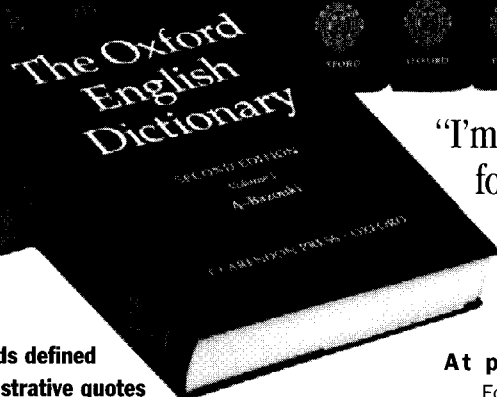
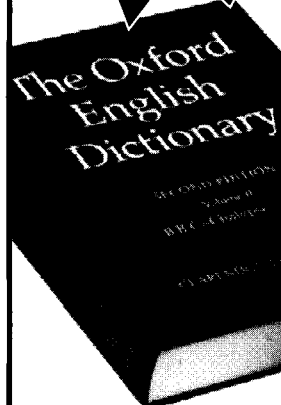
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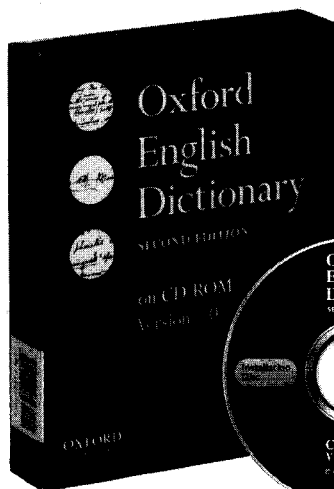
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picture that, for me, might as well be in a foreign language. For the most part, anyway. The setting is a Chicago record shop run by a pop maniac and two equally maniacal chums. Most of the passions and quarrels and jokes come from their fiendish knowledge of rock-n-roll, rhythm-and-blues and such, about which they are fanatically accurate; and none of which registered with me. I have heard philatelists gabble in similar vein, but that was not a generational thing. Here I was so far out of it that I didn't even know (as I was later told) that this apparently "in" music is already fading for the newest generation.

The screenplay was adapted from a novel by Nick Hornby which was set in London. It centers on the amours of the shop's owner, John Cusack. He confides to

the camera quite a good deal, thus enlisting a venerable device in an ultra-mod story. He is reluctant to commit to any woman, a theme that itself is growing gray. But the director, Stephen Frears, the Englishman who made such dazzlers as *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, keeps the action brisk and the actors fresh. Cusack moves from moment to moment like the bouncing ball in a screen sing-along song. Jack Black is screwball-funny as one of his helpers, and Iben Hjejle—the Danish blonde who was the call girl in *Mifune*—is lissome as Cusack's Number One. (Modernity note. In the past, would a foreign actor called Iben Hjejle have been brought into American films without a name change? That's the most cheerily progressive item in this picture.) ■

(1988) and *Murdoch: The Making of a Media Empire* (1993), his biography of Rupert Murdoch, often verged on the hagiographical. And anyone who saw Shawcross in Sarajevo during the Bosnian war can testify to the depth of his adulation for U.N. peacekeeping in general and for Kofi Annan in particular.

For Shawcross, the peacekeepers were rarely doing less than the best that they could do under impossible circumstances. There was plenty of blame to go around, Shawcross concedes. The U.N.'s mandate was hopelessly contradictory, and its means were risibly insufficient; but none of what happened in Bosnia was the U.N.'s fault. And Shawcross was willing to say this to anyone who would listen, including to George Soros—about whom he was briefly thinking of writing a book, naturally—and with whom he traveled to Sarajevo in late 1993.

Soros had a very different view, one that coincided rather closely with the lived reality of the Bosnian capital during the siege. Shawcross recounts Soros's bitter remark comparing Sarajevo to a concentration camp, and insisting that "the only justification of the U.N.'s presence [there] would be if it was lifting the siege." As Shawcross presents it, the comment seems outrageously hyperbolic. To be sure, Sarajevo was not Auschwitz; but it was certainly a new sort of internment camp and, just as Soros claimed, the U.N. was indeed "part of the system that maintains it."

Shawcross deploys every scrap of available evidence that supports the U.N. position, but somehow he never manages to include such details as the fact that the soldiers of UNPROFOR, the U.N. peacekeeping force, routinely turned the lights of their vehicles on Bosnian civilians trying to flee across the Sarajevo airport, thus making them easy targets for the nearby Serb snipers. He never asks himself why his peacekeeping heroes made a number of efforts to collapse the tunnel that the Bosnian government had dug under the airport. He never mentions that in their contacts with the Bosnian people U.N. civil policemen almost invariably behaved exactly like jailers—capriciously confiscating mail (on the entirely trumped-up ground of security worries), while too many ran lucrative black-market schemes, and routinely extorted sex from the Bosnian women with whom they came in contact.

These were not subjects that the United Nations was ever able to face honestly. Eventually, in 1994, there was a commission of inquiry into the black-market activities of the UNPROFOR contingents. It was headed by an Austrian general who had commanded U.N. peacekeeping detachments in the past, and it produced a

Nothing Was Delivered

By DAVID RIEFF

Deliver Us From Evil: Peacekeepers, Warlords and a World of Endless Conflict by William Shawcross

(Simon and Schuster, 416 pp., \$27.50)

I.

THE EPIGRAPH THAT William Shawcross has adopted for his book on United Nations peacekeeping and what is now called "humanitarian military intervention" is Edmund Burke's celebrated remark that "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Burke's sentence has been quoted by many writers, to the point of banality. Kofi Annan used it himself several years ago, in an essay that he contributed to an anthology on humanitarian intervention. But it is, to say the least, a curious epigraph for such a starry-eyed book, a book that is largely a mash note to the United Nations and its secretary-general.

The portrait of the United Nations that Shawcross paints in his book is fawning to the point of embarrassment. The book is sentimental in its presentation, confused in its argumentation, astonishingly ill-informed in its detail, and often flat-out wrong. It is not exactly what one would have expected of Shawcross, whose

earlier dissection of the paradoxes of humanitarian aid in *The Quality of Mercy*, which appeared in 1984, may be the best book ever written on the subject. In that book, Shawcross not only provided a brilliant case study of how a humanitarian operation, buffeted by ignorance, political pressures, and institutional self-interest, can go wrong; he also exposed as a fraud the widespread assumption that there had been a famine in post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia. (Rony Brauman, the former president of Doctors Without Borders, once told me that he, who had run that organization's aid programs in Cambodia during the period, had not understood that terrible reality until after the fact, when he read Shawcross's book.)

But now Shawcross comes as an apologist, not as a debunker. Different times, different mores? It is certainly true that Shawcross's work has changed a great deal since his days of denouncing Henry Kissinger for the American war in Cambodia. The admiration of power and wealth has become a regular preoccupation of his books. His account of Reza Pahlavi's last days in *The Shah's Last Ride*

complete whitewash. The only concrete result of this investigation was that a Ukrainian colonel was rotated home. (He had made his money, and it was time to share the wealth, to allow another officer to enjoy command in Sarajevo.) None of this is clear in Shawcross's lofty and abstract discussion of the implications of humanitarian action in Bosnia. Instead he responds to his grim subject much as U.N. officials did at the time: by stonewalling, by passing the buck, by changing the subject.

It may be that Shawcross's romance with the United Nations predates his small adventure in Sarajevo. What I can attest to, from personal experience, is that, by the time he arrived in the city in 1993, he was in full hero-worship mode. In that year, our paths crossed in Sarajevo. I took Shawcross to visit the city morgue—a reality check that John Burns, the *New York Times* correspondent and the dean of the Sarajevo press corps, always recommended to his fellow scribblers. The morgue was the ground zero of the siege, where bodies, sometimes whole and sometimes in parts, lay covered by rough blankets on the cement floor. In this place, the rationales of the U.N., all its apologias for why nothing more could be done, were to be seen for what they really were.

Later Shawcross took me to the building that housed UNPROFOR's headquarters. He was there to see an old friend, the Brazilian diplomat Sergio Vieira de Mello, whom he had known in Cambodia and who was then serving as a senior U.N. official in Bosnia. While we waited, Shawcross remarked how interesting it would be to serve as the U.N. spokesman in Sarajevo. His admiration was palpable.

It was also preposterous. For the job of the U.N. spokesman in Sarajevo was to defend the indefensible. It was, after all, the UNPROFOR spokesman, Lt. Col. Barry Frewer—apparently on orders from his superiors, including the Japanese diplomat Yasushi Akashi, the U.N.'s special representative for the former Yugoslavia and one of the lesser heroes of Shawcross's book—who insisted to an

incredulous foreign press corps that really there was no siege of Sarajevo at all, but only "a tactically advantageous position" that the Serbs happened to enjoy. And it was the U.N. spokesmen who, as the Serbs began their assault on Srebrenica in 1995, ridiculed the anguished predictions that what was taking place was a final assault on the enclave whose result would be at least as hideous as the massacres that the Serbs had committed in the Croatian city of Vukovar in 1991. The Serbs, they said, were simply "adjusting" the confrontation line.



Kofi Annan by Vint Lawrence for The New Republic

BUT THESE ARE anecdotes. The larger truth is that Shawcross's tropism toward over-identifying with his subjects leads him away from making any effort to confront analytically or critically the dilemmas of humanitarian assistance in general, and the dilemmas of U.N. peacekeeping in the 1990s in particular. He did not become the U.N.'s spokesman in Sarajevo, but he wrote the book that its spokesman, and his superiors in Zagreb and at headquarters in New York, kept wishing would get written. It has an agit-prop feel to it. All that is missing are phrases like "stormy applause" when Annan appears.

Nowhere in his book does Shawcross address the alternatives to his glowing interpretation of Annan and the United Nations beyond referring to various "swinging" attacks (including one by me in these pages). If the historical record demonstrates anything, however, it is that the international institution that was most consistently guilty of precisely the dereliction against which Burke warned was the United Nations in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s, when Shawcross's hero Annan was head of the U.N.'s Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and

two of his principal aides, Shashi Tharoor, now his communications and special-projects director, and Iqbal Riza, now his chef de cabinet, were the principal officials at U.N. headquarters responsible respectively for Bosnia and the Great Lakes region of Africa.

The structure that Shawcross chooses for his narrative is unfortunate. He tries to narrate all the crises of U.N. peacekeeping under the leadership of Boutros-Ghali and then of Annan exactly as they played out. This leads him to endless repetitions. People have to be identified and re-identified. Nor is there any scope for the depth of characterization that such complicated events and such complicated (and even tragic) figures demand. Shashi Tharoor is given as the "acute Indian novelist and diplomat," as if he were an extra from Masterpiece Theater. General Rupert Smith, UNPROFOR's last commander, is "ram-rod

straight," as if he were some refugee from the *Boy's Own Paper*. And having chosen to tell the story of U.N. peacekeeping chronologically, Shawcross is obliged to oscillate from Cambodia to Bosnia to Somalia and back again, which is maddening.

Worst of all, there is Shawcross's sloppiness with definitions. He is not a serious analyst of anything. The most basic terms and the most fundamental concepts are constantly confused. It is never clear from Shawcross's definition of humanitarian intervention whether he is talking about international humanitarian aid, human rights, or simply the wish of powerful

states and decent people to have some florid killing stopped. Shawcross does assert that intervention can sometimes do more harm than good, but that is where his thinking stops. He never takes the next step, which is to ask, if this is true, whether he is right to welcome changes in the international order such as the International Criminal Court, or new moves, championed by Annan and the U.N. secretariat, and increasingly abetted by important human rights and humanitarian organizations, to make humanitarian military intervention the norm in international affairs rather than the rare and tormented exception.

THIS UNABASHEDLY sentimental view of the United Nations is perfectly encapsulated by the photograph on the cover of Shawcross's book. It shows a U.N. soldier holding the hand of a small child somewhere in the Balkans. That is U.N. peacekeeping as the U.N.'s press people tried to present it during the Bosnian war—an effort that made the U.N. look like a pious fraud to the peoples of the former Yugoslavia and a laughing stock to those who covered the torments of those peoples. (The joke in Sarajevo was that UNPROFOR, or the United Nations Protection Force, stood for “United Nations Self-Protection Force.”) The image puts one in mind of the brochure printed by the U.N. Civil Affairs department in Croatia in 1993, and distributed all over Bosnia, that instructed that U.N. peacekeepers were “like the teacher at school who protects you from a bully.”

In private, of course, many U.N. officials, including Tharoor himself, deplored such propaganda efforts, which were undertaken either over their objections or without their consent. Outside U.N. headquarters, however, he and his colleagues adhered to the institution's *omerta*. At the beginning of the U.N. deployment in Bosnia, U.N. officials, including both Tharoor and Marrack Goulding, the head of the U.N.'s department of peacekeeping operations, had opposed the operation on the sensible grounds that, as Goulding said publicly, there was no peace to keep. But once the operation was launched, those charged with carrying out the U.N.'s mandate in Bosnia confined themselves to grouching in private about the ways peacekeeping was being misused. Giandomenico Picco, himself a former senior U.N. official, later insisted that “a part of the U.N. died in Bosnia,” but this truth never seems to have persuaded Tharoor, Riza, Annan, or most of their colleagues. Certainly, it never shook their determination to carry out their task according to norms of peacekeeping that everyone

understood to be entirely inappropriate to the terrifying Bosnian situation.

DURING THOSE YEARS, many who witnessed the conduct of the U.N. peacekeeping operation on the ground in Bosnia implored U.N. officials to reconsider this strict adherence to what are referred to, in the peacekeeper's terms of art, as “neutrality” and “impartiality.” The critics argued that a policy that made no moral distinction between the Serb perpetrators of the aggression against Bosnia and their victims, the people of Bosnia and their legitimate, internationally-recognized government, was an immoral policy. The U.N.'s response, whether it was delivered with the courtliness of Annan, the eloquence of Tharoor, or the bad faith of Akashi, was always pretty much the same. It had two elements. The first was that the mandate that the U.N. had received from the Security Council obliged it to not to make moral distinctions or political judgments. The second was that the U.N. was a peacekeeping institution, not a war-making institution. As Boutros-Ghali put it more than once, the U.N.'s role was to further “the logic of peace rather than the logic of war.”

On the question of the mandate, the U.N. position can at least be partly justified. The limitations on its ability to act were real. For most of the Bosnian war, the British and French governments, which were the two main contributors of troops to the UNPROFOR operation in Bosnia, were determined to prevent any expansion of the U.N.'s role beyond a peacekeeping operation in support of a humanitarian relief effort. As the war dragged on, and the great powers came under increasing pressure from the public to do something more than maintain the peacekeeping deployment and keep the aid flowing into Bosnia, Security Council resolution after Security Council resolution was passed, largely to defuse public pressure. This did little to help Bosnia. It also produced the effect of so confusing matters that, by the time of the Srebrenica massacre in 1995, the U.N.'s mandate had become utterly incoherent.

All this led to Security Council Resolution 836, the catastrophic Safe Areas resolution that was passed on June 4th, 1993. The U.N. secretariat opposed it at the time, and was at pains to point out how impossible it would be to carry out. The idea was to afford U.N. protection to six particularly endangered areas controlled by the Bosnian government, including besieged Sarajevo and the beleaguered eastern enclaves of Gorazde, Zepa, and Srebrenica. In reality, the plan was a cynical sham perpetrated by the British and French governments and acceded to by the Amer-

icans. There was never any intention to take the measures that were necessary to defend those places. The last thing the British and the French wanted was to confront the Serbs. They wanted to continue business as usual in Bosnia: to contain the war within its borders; and provide humanitarian relief to the greatest degree possible without actually securing freedom of movement for humanitarian convoys by force; and to press for the diplomatic solution that the negotiators were pleased to call “peace” but that was really the surrender of Bosnia and the partition of the country, which had been the goal of the Serb irridentists and their paymasters in Belgrade from the beginning of the war.

THAT THE UNITED NATIONS connived in this deception is regrettable, but in a way it is understandable. That is how the institution has always functioned, and the way it probably has to function, given the tension inherent in the U.N. Charter between the Secretariat's role as an independent actor and as a servicing body to member states. But the manner in which the U.N. rationalized its role in Bosnia is unpardonable. It makes me almost physically ill to recall the number of U.N. officials who told me that they could not afford “the luxury” of allowing their private views to interfere with their duties. As 10,000 Sarajevans, including 3,000 children, were blown to bits in a siege that the official UNPROFOR spokesman had insisted was not a siege, U.N. officials gave a new bloom to the excuse about following orders. Not a single one of them resigned in shame or anger.

And yet it is this congeries of U.N. true believers, weaklings, time-servers, and conformists—these officials who, by their own admission in the recent report on the Srebrenica massacre that was written by David Harland, a New Zealander who served as a senior U.N. official in Bosnia, and rewritten by senior members of the secretariat, including Riza and Tharoor, and signed by Annan, concede that the United Nations failed to comprehend the evil that they confronted in the Bosnian Serbs—who are Shawcross's heroes of the new and better world order that, he argues, is slowly coming into being. The story of the U.N.'s scandalous failure to make moral distinctions in Bosnia is presented by Shawcross as “overall ... a hopeful story.” “In a more religious time,” he concludes, “it was only God whom we asked to deliver us from evil. Now we call upon our own man-made institutions for such deliverance. That is sometimes to ask for miracles.” No, not for miracles; merely for moral action.

II.

WHAT MAKES SHAWCROSS'S book such an embarrassment is that it appears in the form that it does, and makes the arguments that it does, in the immediate aftermath of Annan's own damning report on Srebrenica, and also of the report on Rwanda that he commissioned from a group of outside experts led by the former Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson. Obviously, every writer who deals with events or subjects that are still unfolding has to rewrite hastily as his work goes to press. Poor Shawcross. He had to work into his book two official United Nations documents that demolish it.

For the Srebrenica and Rwanda reports establish, belatedly but incontrovertibly, that the U.N. secretariat itself—and not, as Shawcross claims in his book, echoing the mantra of senior members of the secretariat for most of the 1990s, only U.N. member states, let alone that mythical entity “the international community”—is to blame for what went wrong in the Balkans and the Great Lakes region of Africa. Taken together, the reports paint a portrait of U.N. negligence, moral failure, and mistakes that is almost unbearable to read.

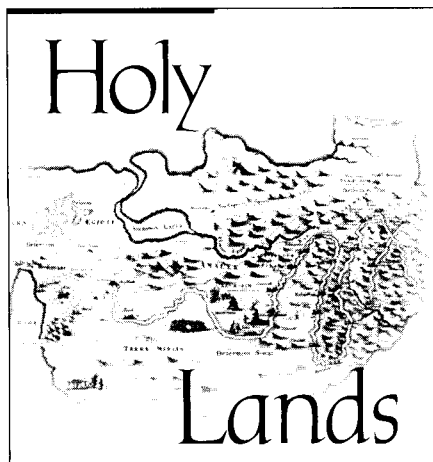
The Srebrenica report accepts that the U.N.'s strategy of placing a priority on negotiating with the Serbs—the architects, as the report concedes, of “attempted genocide in Bosnia”—“amounted to appeasement” at various points during the war. The Rwanda report sternly criticizes Annan, who was the head of U.N. peacekeeping at the time, for not passing onto the Security Council information that he had received from General Romeo Dallaire, the U.N.'s force commander in Rwanda, warning that a genocide might be imminent, and requesting permission to move against its planners. Given the sweeping character of this self-indictment, it is simply incomprehensible that Shawcross could have maintained his faith in U.N. peacekeeping. But he believes in the radiant future, and he is not about to be impeded by the facts.

It is true that Shawcross concedes, at two different points in his book, that the recent U.N. reports are “devastating,” and he cites Annan's expression of “deep remorse” on behalf of his institution. But if Annan has changed his view, Shawcross clearly has not. The reader would never know from his cursory description of these documents that what is devastating about them is the criticism that they level at both the moral and operational underpinnings of U.N. peacekeeping. How could Shawcross have read these reports, and their assessment of the U.N.'s conduct

in general and Annan's conduct in particular, and still continue to assert that the secretary-general is “a good and uncommon man invested with the hopes and moral authority of the world, charged to deal with evil, and at the same time buffeted and limited in that task by the world's principalities and powers”?

EARLY IN THE book, Shawcross writes of his difficulty in describing “the men and women, often anonymous, whom the international community sends to corral” the villains whom he describes as “the warlords.” The use of the term “warlords” to refer to tyrants and satraps as different in their backgrounds, in their levels of legitimacy, and in their levels of sanity as Slobodan Milosevic, Pol Pot, Raoul Cedras, and Jonas Savimbi is sufficient evidence of the reductive vulgarity of Shawcross's approach. But there is worse to follow. “What,” he writes, enjoying the pathos that he is inventing, “are the particular problems faced by a Japanese U.N. official in the Balkans, a Canadian general caught in genocide in Rwanda, a French volunteer in Cambodia, a Brazilian refugee official in Congo—or a Ghanaian civil servant charged with the moral leadership of the world?” It is the wrong question, as Shawcross might have known if he had not been trapped, like an insect in amber, inside the seal of his own hero-worship. The lesson that Shawcross should have learned on the various trips that he took with Annan—*Deliver Us from Evil* is the product of unparalleled access to the Secretary-General and his team—is that the bureaucrats and the commanders of the United Nations are not thwarted moralists brimming with good intentions in a bad world. They are actors in crises, autonomous actors capable of choice, of doing the right thing or the wrong thing; and actors whose wrong choices, when they make them, are sorely in need of extenuation. The blame for the moral and operational failures must be laid at someone else's door: the member states, or the “warlords,” or (as Shawcross puts it, at a level of generality that would blind anyone to the realities of policy) “the evil that they attempt to face down.”

The allegedly noble figures whom Shawcross mentions in the passage quoted above are all, with the exception of the French volunteer, career U.N. officials. They are men of great political ambition and considerable ruthlessness. Were they not such men, they would never have gotten where they did. And what they have earned is precisely what Shawcross in his U.N. idyll declines to accord them: the respect of taking their decisions seriously, rather than sentimentalizing them; the respect that makes criticism possible. For



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whether it is Yasushi Akashi, who ran the U.N.'s transitional authority in Cambodia before going on to serve as the special representative of the secretary-general in the former Yugoslavia, before going on to run the U.N.'s department of humanitarian affairs; or Sergio Vieira de Mello, who began as a U.N. refugee official, became the U.N.'s proconsul in Sarajevo, returned to UNHCR to handle the crisis in the refugee camps of eastern Zaire in the wake of the Rwandan genocide; or Annan himself—these are not just figures caught by “conflicting demands.” They are not tragic figures. They are worldly figures, political figures; figures of power, whose actions can damage entire populations; figures, therefore, who must be strenuously judged.

SHAWCROSS EXPENDS A great many words explaining the political constraints that hamper the United Nations. He writes as if the internal politics of the institution and the personal ambitions of its officials were of no consequence to the decisions taken by Annan and his subordinates. Time and again, however, those considerations were absolutely central. During the time in which he headed the U.N.'s peacekeeping department, Kofi Annan's name was already in play as a possible successor to Boutros Boutros-Ghali as secretary-general. Sadako Ogata's decisions in eastern Zaire during the refugee emergency of 1994–1996 are widely regarded by aid workers as having been influenced by her own ambitions to run the U.N. And Sergio de Mello is already allowing others to campaign on his behalf to succeed Ogata at UNHCR when she retires next year, and he is widely believed to harbor ambitions to be secretary-general. (His decision to second himself from his job as head of U.N. humanitarian coordination to become the world body's proconsul in East Timor was widely regarded as a move to further those ambitions.)

There can be no doubt that a writer as plugged-in as Shawcross knows these stories. That he did not see fit to take them into account testifies to the essentially apologetic nature of his enterprise. Indeed, with the exception of Akashi, whose lamentable conduct in Bosnia even Shawcross cannot find a way to praise enthusiastically, any of the principle figures whom Shawcross treats could make good use of his book as a campaign document for whatever post they now covet. This, again, is the United Nations as the United Nations prefers to see itself: often sinned against, but never sinning.

My own suspicion is that, the Srebrenica and Rwanda reports notwithstanding, Shawcross's account coincides with

the real feelings of Annan and his aides far more closely than their rather cursory efforts at self-criticism. It may be that, as Shawcross reports and the Secretary-General has stated publicly, Annan is now filled with “remorse” about the U.N.'s failure in Rwanda in 1993 and 1994. But then why did he take a very different position until the very end of 1999, until the report was issued? Indeed, Shawcross's own reporting provides the best evidence of the secretary-general's previous lack of contrition. His disgracefully selective account of his trip with Annan to Rwanda in 1998 is a case study in institutional defiance. Presumably reflecting Annan's own view, Shawcross writes that the secretary-general was “ambushed” in Rwanda, “was insulted and abused for the failures of [the international community] to take action to prevent the genocide.”

At the time of that trip, the U.N. was hewing to the view that it had nothing to feel remorseful about, except perhaps its own failure to arouse the conscience of the great powers and to persuade them to deploy additional peacekeepers. This line was encapsulated by Iqbal Riza's reaction to Philip Gourevitch's revelation that he, writing in Annan's name, had refused General Dallaire's request for permission to go after the Hutu extremists planning the genocide. Shawcross quotes Riza's remark to Gourevitch: “We get hyperbole in many reports.” And this coincides with a conversation I once had with Hedi Anabi, then the desk officer for Rwanda at the department of peacekeeping. Serenely and unrepentantly, he told me that the Dallaire cable was alarming, but other cables that the U.N. was receiving from its people in the field were optimistic, and “one has to be a bit of an optimist” as a peacekeeping official.

There is no mention in Shawcross's book of the fact that the U.N. special representative in Rwanda, the Cameroonian diplomat Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, was widely regarded as being a supporter of the Hutu regime in Kigali—a reflection, it was said, of Boutros-Ghali's own tendency to reflect the French viewpoint on African questions. (The French were bitterly anti-Tutsi and continued to provide weapons to the forces committing the genocide for the first several weeks after the slaughter began.) It is a complicated and shabby story, whose outlines (including the tortured question of whether it was Tutsi rebels who assassinated the country's president, Juvenal Habyarimana, on April 6th, 1994, the event that actually provoked the beginning of the attempt to exterminate the Tutsis) are still anything but clear. But what is *not* shrouded in mystery is the fact that the U.N. as an institution bears a good deal of the blame.

III.

TO HAVE ACCEPTED this fact would have obliged Shawcross to write a very different book. Instead, incredibly, he presents the release of the Rwanda and Srebrenica reports as two more moral triumphs for the U.N. and for the shining knight, Annan. Having quoted Annan's expression of remorse, Shawcross segues into an astonishing assertion. Taken together, he writes, the reports “showed a new culture of openness at the United Nations under Annan.” He then goes on to quote various kudos that the secretary-general received for his “simple honesty.” And again, he goes on to exculpate the U.N. “The bottom line in both cases,” he writes, “was that major governments did not want to do more.” That may be the bottom line on the thirty-eighth floor in Turtle Bay, but in truth the reports demonstrate an entirely different conclusion. And the fact that the U.N. issued a report, almost half a decade after this catastrophe, hardly wipes the slate clean. Indeed, if Annan really believes that the United Nations is guilty of nothing less than what is described in the Srebrenica report, then surely the only honorable course of action for this honorable man would be to resign his office.

But that will be the day. One of the most appalling features of the U.N.'s history, of its institutional culture, is that no senior official has ever resigned on a matter of principle. Quite the contrary. When you are in the system, you are in it for life. Before making all the wrong decisions about how to manage peacekeeping in the Balkans and how to respond to Dallaire's entreaties, Annan presided over the personnel department, when it was a cesspool of corruption and favoritism; but now he speaks of U.N. reform with a straight face, and Shawcross speaks of him as the right man for the right job. (If only the great powers would face their responsibilities, of course.) And Shawcross's lesser idols are just as compromised. Akashi was for all intents and purposes a pacifist. His policy of appeasement (I take the word from the Srebrenica report), of placating the Serbs at any cost, all but assured that they would believe that they could undertake the campaign of ethnic cleansing, mass rape, and massacre that culminated in Srebrenica.

What happened to Akashi when he left the Balkans? He was promoted. So was Sergio de Mello, whose idea of an intelligent approach to the instability in the refugee camps in eastern Zaire in 1996 was to hire Mobutu's soldiers to patrol them. These were the same Zairean soldiers who were supplying the genocidaires in the camps. It was a decision that cemented the

Rwandan government's decision to overrun the camps and—with enormous and predictable brutality, which UNHCR and the rest of the U.N. also tried to cover up—to drive most of the refugees home, but not before killing somewhere between 100,000 and 250,000 of them. And now De Mello, who was also promoted, is the insider's bet for the top job at UNHCR or the Secretariat.

THESE OFFICIALS WHOM Shawcross views with such reverence are individuals who are utterly impervious to shame. And none more so than Annan himself. Consider again Annan's famous visit to Rwanda in 1998, and Shawcross's account of it. He treats the hostility that the Rwandans showed the secretary-general upon his arrival as an act of lèse-majesté—of impiety. For is not the United Nations always trying to do the right thing? Who did those dour, unforgiving Rwandans think they were to treat the secretary-general in such a manner? Shawcross recognizes that the Rwandans expected Annan to do what President Clinton had done in an earlier visit, to "make a personal mea culpa." But he does not see why Annan should have complied with their expectation, and he contrasts Annan's supposed honesty and straightforwardness in Rwanda with what he views as President Clinton's self-evident hypocrisy.

Shawcross's distaste for Rwanda is plain throughout his book. His indignation over what happened to Annan in Rwanda actually leads him to contrast it unfavorably with Burundi, a country whose leadership, unlike the Tutsi-led regime in Rwanda, is quite literally indefensible. But his account of the trip is more important for the way it captures Annan and his entourage in pre-Carlsson-report, pre-remorse mode. Shawcross describes how Annan, when pressed by the Rwandan authorities about the U.N.'s responsibility for the disaster and his personal sense of responsibility for it, replied by making "a distinction which is fundamental, but not always understood, and rarely appreciated." Shawcross appears at a loss to explain why. Yet he himself describes how, before the visit, Annan's team had "discussed at length how apologetic [he] should be about the genocide and the failure of the U.N. or the international community."

Shawcross reports that a Rwandan presidential spokesman's subsequent observation that the secretary-general's remarks were "arrogant, insensitive, and insulting," but he does not quote the Rwandan foreign minister's more pertinent observation that the secretary-general had attempted to subsume the "particular guilt of the U.N. in the general guilt of

the international community"—which, as Shawcross's own account demonstrates, is exactly what Annan did. And scandalously, Shawcross never informs his readers that, far from having conspired over a long period of time to "ambush" the visiting U.N. dignitaries for their own cynical motives, the Rwandans were in fact in a state of white-hot anger as a result of something that Annan said at a press conference in Nairobi the night before his arrival in Rwanda. There, to the stupefaction of the assembled press corps, Annan had insisted that had he to do it all over again, he would "not have done anything differently" about General Dallaire's warning about the Hutu extremists.

SHAWCROSS ATTENDED THIS press conference. He describes it at some length. And yet he omits any mention of Annan's defense of an action that is explicitly condemned in the Carlsson report, the same report that Annan now says he accepts unreservedly. This not only makes Shawcross's account tendentious; it also makes Annan's contrition hollow. Shawcross approvingly quotes the statement of one of Annan's aides that the secretary-general's "great strength is that he has no ego and therefore no agenda. He never feels insulted and is humble enough to recognize mistakes." But the lesson of Shawcross's own narrative of Annan's trip to Rwanda suggests that the opposite is the case.

Annan's decision not to apologize was not only an instance of stiff-necked unrepentance. Left to his own devices, he has never apologized for anything, or accepted that any particular blame attaches to the United Nations. Long after the Bosnian disaster, Annan was still insisting in speeches and articles that the UNPROFOR mission was, as he once put it, "unjustly maligned," and that within the terms of its mandate it had "been a success." It took the Srebrenica report to force him to acknowledge the U.N.'s guilt, just as it took the Rwanda report to force him to issue the statement that "on behalf of the United Nations, I acknowledge this failure and express my deep remorse"—which was all the Rwandans had wanted him to do in 1998.

It never seems to occur to Shawcross that there are unsettling moral lessons to be drawn from Annan's habit of defending the U.N.'s performance to the last possible moment. And that has always been his method of operation. (It was Kofi Annan, remember, who came back from Baghdad in February, 1998 boasting that Saddam Hussein was a man whom "I can do business with.") Much is made at U.N. headquarters about the sweeping self-indictment of the Srebrenica report; but

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the very thing that makes the Srebrenica report so valuable is what makes a mockery of such self-congratulation. For the report establishes—once and for all, and more definitively even than those painstaking journalists on the scene who grew hoarse making this point during the Bosnian war—that what was wrong with the U.N.'s conduct in Bosnia was nothing other than “the pervasive ambivalence within the United Nations regarding the role of force in the pursuit of peace,” and “an institutional ideology of impartiality even when confronted with attempted genocide.” Did we really need to wait five years for the United Nations to come to the conclusion of which most decent people had arrived at on their own while the slaughter was still going on, which was that the Bosnian war “was a moral cause as much as a military conflict?”

THE FACT THAT these reports now exist and will represent the considered judgment of history on the U.N.'s role in the Bosnian war and the Rwandan genocide is a victory for truth, just as Shawcross's book is a defeat for truth. I am by no means sure that Shawcross understands the gravity of his distortions. When, for example, he compares all sides in the Bosnian conflict, including the Sarajevo government, to the warring factions in Somalia, does he realize that he is giving one final rendition of the U.N.'s consistent effort to de-legitimize the Bosnians, and to describe them, as U.N. briefers routinely did, as warring “parties” or “factions?” Does he even know about the effort of the European Union, and its negotiators David Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, to undermine the authority of President Izetbegovic by bringing the renegade Muslim leader Fikret Abdic, to the peace talks in Geneva, providing him with a U.N. helicopter, and facilitating his private negotiations with the Serbs and Croats? This shabby episode shocked even General Francis Briquemont, who writes in his memoirs of his UNPROFOR command that it was “an incomprehensible initiative.”

In fact, there was nothing incomprehensible about it at all. These U.N. officials wanted at all costs to discredit the government in Sarajevo, even though it, too, was a U.N. member. They wanted to pretend that it was a faction. But it was not a faction; it was a state. Shawcross has nothing but good things to say about Owen, more or less recapitulating his version of his supposed mistreatment by Warren Christopher in 1993. About Stoltenberg, he maintains a discreet silence, as well he might: it was Stoltenberg, the senior representative of Shawcross's beloved U.N., who declared in a speech to the Norwe-

gian parliament that the Bosnian Muslims were really all Serbs—a claim that even most Serb nationalists only made in their most extreme moments.

Has Shawcross read the Stoltenberg speech? Apparently not. But perhaps it would not have mattered even if he had. He is more comfortable holed up in his world of wicked warlords, and innocent civilians fed up with war, and international saviors. Here is how Shawcross parses the dilemma of humanitarian action in Bosnia. “As in Somalia and elsewhere,” he writes, “peacekeepers, humanitarian workers, refugees and the internally displaced were now all pawns to be played by warlords and their minions.” But this was precisely *not* the Bosnian dilemma.

The problem in Bosnia was that both the U.N. and the great powers pretended that this was a humanitarian crisis that they could adjudicate, whereas in fact it was a political crisis in which it was necessary to take sides. Rony Brauman once observed that if Auschwitz occurred today, it, too, would be described as a humanitarian emergency. By accepting the worst and the most condescending version of contemporary humanitarianism, which takes the politics out of history, Shawcross makes things too easy. The people of Bosnia were not all yearning for peace, as he suggests; nor were they being cynically manipulated by their leaders. They simply had (as George Dangerfield once said of the Irish Nationalists in pre-World War I Westminster) “the bad taste to be in earnest about the freedom of their country.”

IV.

THE WILL TO simplify never leaves Shawcross. Even his sections on Sierra Leone—a place that Shawcross knows better than Rwanda or Bosnia, having worked there as an investigator for the International Crisis Group—are marred by his tropism toward the easy cliché and the ungrounded generalization. The Sierra Leonean rebel Foday Sankoh is every bit as monstrous as Shawcross says he is, but he is not simply a terrorist—any more than Radovan Karadzic was just a terrorist in Bosnia or Mohammed Farah Aided in Somalia. Calling them names is fine—can we call them names? Well then, they are homicidal swine—but denying that they are also representative men in some essential ways only produces false expectations.

It may be an article of faith at the United Nations, as Shawcross writes, that the clans in Somalia are fighting “at the expense of the population.” Such a characterization is true in a trivial way, and it

is purely sentimental. Shawcross, like the suits whom he admires, has trouble understanding the role of war in nation-building. The phenomenon certainly cannot be wished away. Even Foday Sankoh's RUF has deep roots in the particular history and political crisis of contemporary Sierra Leone, as well as in the religious dimension of the recent wars in West Africa. Shawcross might have understood this if he had read Stephen Ellis's brilliant account of the Liberian civil war, *The Mask of Anarchy*, or Paul Richards's fine study of the RUF, *Fighting for the Rain Forests: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone*. But those discussions would have disrupted his morality play, in which the world depends on the United Nations as its moral anchor, while the world body keeps trying, usually against insuperable odds and against a backdrop of generalized indifference, to protect innocent victims from the depredations of wicked warlords, and so on.

THE BRITISH JOURNALIST Lindsay Hilsum once warned that if you go to a place as a journalist and see only chaos, then you are not understanding what you are witnessing. Shawcross fell into this trap as if it had been configured to his form. It is not just that he consistently and unashamedly reproduces all the old canards of the U.N. peacekeeping establishment, though this is bad enough. He also has written a tract to buttress the calls for a new age of humanitarian interventions that were first bruited by Annan at a speech at Ditchley Park in 1998, and reinforced in his astonishing and wrongheaded claim, in a speech opening the session of the U.N. General Assembly in 1999, that if the United Nations were only “given the means—in Kosovo and in Sierra Leone, in East Timor and in Angola—we have a real opportunity to break the cycles of violence once and for all.”

That speech is a perfect blend of the arrogance and the amnesia that has marked Kofi Annan's tenure as secretary-general. The reader will note that the supposed remorse of the Srebrenica report, and the mea culpa in the wake of the Carlsson report on Rwanda, and the repeated calls for modesty and self-interrogation, have lately been retired. Instead there is the old, imperious, deluded idealism of a feckless organization pretending that it really is some sort of world government, as if any sort of world government could be counted upon to put even a dent in all this evil. The premise of Annan's new activism about humanitarian intervention is that the U.N.'s failure in the past should not be held against it in the future, just as Annan's own

deplorable record as head of peacekeeping should not lead anyone to doubt his fitness for his office or the moral leadership of the world. The past, Annan and his defenders seem to be saying, is what Annan says it is.

This categorical refusal of reality is what permits Shawcross to conclude that "this is a hopeful story," that out of the disastrous policies of the decade a stirring new consensus about intervention is being forged. It is Annan, of course, who personifies "the spirit of the international community." To be sure, Shawcross worries for a moment that asking to be delivered from evil is "sometimes to ask for miracles"; but the moment passes, and Shawcross proceeds to shill for miracles. He lumps very

different ideas and imperatives, from humanitarianism to human rights to the military interventions of great powers and international bodies, into one great lofty catchall. Shawcross's reader would not know from Shawcross's book that those ideas and policies are not only not complementary, but actually contradictory.

But then Shawcross is not teaching his reader to think. He is teaching his reader to adore certain saints, and to cling to certain illusions about the conditions for a better world. The international community? Surely the events in Bosnia and Rwanda deserve to have made the term "international community" forever into a term of disgrace. A hopeful story? This is the most hopeless story of our time. ■

Entertainment and identity, Yiddish-style.

The Smell of the Greasepaint, the Roar of the Torah

By RUTH R. WISSE

SHOULD THE CREATORS of *Shakespeare in Love* ever wish to replicate their success, they will find in the story of Jacob Adler many of the same raw ingredients: a national theater just starting up under the watchful eye of a still-powerful monarch; a pool of ambitious, high-spirited young men who discover a new arena of economic competition; a society chafing under religious supervision that wants entertainment in place of sermons; and an artist-hero who can offer precisely what the moment requires.

Jacob Adler dominated the Yiddish stage from its beginnings in Russia through its transitional phase in London to its triumph in New York at the start of the twentieth century. Critics dubbed him *hanesher hagadol*, or "the great eagle," punning in Hebrew on his family name. (Adler is German for "eagle.") And Adler's romantic history, unlike Shakespeare's, would not have to be invented, since he married several of his leading ladies, and played the matinée idol offstage as well as on. The shift of dramatic focus from

writer to actor would also accord well with the historical differences between the two national theaters: the British stage was dominated by its playwrights, the Yiddish stage was dominated by its actors.

A LIFE ON THE STAGE:

A MEMOIR

by Jacob Adler
translated, edited, and
with commentary
by Lulla Adler
(Alfred A. Knopf, 416 pp., \$30)

GOD, MAN, AND DEVIL: YIDDISH PLAYS

IN TRANSLATION
translated and edited
by Nahma Sandrow
(Syracuse University Press,
321 pp., \$24.95)

KLEZMER!

JEWISH MUSIC FROM OLD
WORLD TO OUR WORLD
by Henry Sapoznik
(Schirmer, 350 pp., \$29.95)

Adler was born in Odessa in 1855, the only surviving male of his parents' twelve children. He was the son of a respectable

Orthodox family, but in his teens he began hanging out in the racy Moldavaka district; and he was on his way to becoming a small time thug, like Isaac Babel's Benya Krik, when he fell under the spell of the local Russian theater. He tried to get an acting job, but was told by a sympathetic director that a Jew could never make it on the Russian stage. And so he was wildly excited to read in the newspapers, one day in 1876, that Abraham Goldfaden had mounted the first Yiddish theater performances in a Romanian beer garden.

Even better, a friend of Adler's, Yisroel Rosenberg, was appearing with Goldfaden's troupe. Adler arranged for the company to come to Odessa, and he angled for bit-parts in its local productions. Goldfaden had founded the Yiddish theater with musical sketches and light satire. But Adler could not sing, and his career was determined by the lack of that skill. This disadvantage forced him to look for character parts and romantic leads, and for a more serious kind of drama to support his talent.

THE YIDDISH THEATER in Russia was more than usually makeshift in its initial search for venue, repertoire, audience, and legitimacy. Long outlawed by the government, it started up during the relatively liberal reign of Tsar Alexander II, and was then banned again in 1883, following his assassination. It was during that blessed interval that Adler made his Odessa debut, and began touring some of the Jewish communities of Russia. In his memoir, Adler describes the madcap scramble in each new place to find suitable halls and to pick up local actors, including young women who were appearing in Yiddish theater for the first time.

The Yiddish company had to promise a carefully calibrated sensation that would create new audiences without alarming the police, who could shut the theater down at any time. Its most serious problem was the repertoire, which depended almost entirely on Goldfaden, and on competitors who tried to copy his manner or simply steal his scripts. Ignored by most learned Jews, and out of bounds to most non-Jews, the playwright wrote strictly for the gallery, repeating a successful formula for as long as it served him.

Adler made his debut in Goldfaden's *The Sorceress*, a melodramatic operetta of improbable national force. A remarried widower, celebrating his daughter Mirele's birthday in the presence of her fiancé and her friends, is suddenly arrested by the police for an undisclosed offense. It turns out that a local fortune-teller, the sorceress, in league with his second wife, plotted to divide his wealth by framing him for

RUTH R. WISSE is professor of Yiddish and comparative literature at Harvard University.

a crime; and when the first part of her scheme succeeds, she sells Mirele off to white slave traders in Constantinople. The main plot follows the efforts of the enlightened hero (played by Adler) to clear his prospective father-in-law and to find his lost bride. But the play's central character is an itinerant peddler named Hotsmakh, who initially punctures the security of the birthday party with his cynical entertainment and later outmaneuvers the villains to bring about a happy end.

Hotsmakh's name—it is a contraction of "have yourselves," as in *hots makh a mi'se meshune*, or "have yourselves a strange death"—advertises his show-stopping function. He is Karl Marx's worst nightmare: the apotheosis of the Jewish tradesman, but rendered by Goldfaden as the Jewish comic spirit. In the same operetta, Goldfaden provided the emerging Jewish bourgeoisie with its birthday song, the Yiddish equivalent of "Happy Birthday," and a definitive parody of its bourgeois aspirations. In the sorceress, Goldfaden represented (without naming the government) the evil that can rob the Jew at any time of his happiness and his dreams; while Hotsmakh was the figure of plucky necessity, whose meddling while peddling is the Jew's best hope.

Unfit by his temperament and his talent for roles such as Hotsmakh, Adler, who had seen some of the great European dramas on the Russian stage, wanted "something high, almost holy" from the Yiddish theater. Grand indigenous vehicles were simply not available. Several Jewish Enlighteners earlier in the century had also wanted to cultivate higher values through the medium of theater, but their reformist zeal produced mostly satire. Adapting the domestic comedies of Western Europe, they drew a bead on such institutions as arranged marriage, Jewish tax farming, and the dynastic nature of the Hasidic rabbinate. Their pungent polemics seldom got published, much less performed, but in any case they would not have satisfied Adler's longing for exalting drama.

Adler found what he was looking for in *Uriel Acosta*, a German drama that was written by Karl Gutzkow in 1846. Instead of merely exposing Jewish folly, the play set up a tragic contest between competing values: love of family and community on one hand, love of truth on the other. The historical Acosta was Spinoza's precursor in heresy and scandal, whose Marrano family had fled from the Spanish Inquisition to Amsterdam in order to return to Judaism, but who, as a skeptic, denied the tenets of all religion, and was threatened with excommunication unless he recanted his subversive writings. Gutzkow's Acosta (here quoted in an almost contemporary translation from 1860) initially de-

fies the rabbis for the sake of his scientific convictions:

'Tis knightly pride
That now does set its spurs into my sides,
And hushes ev'ry sound of pallid fear,
If I have erred, I've erred for truth;
for Priests,
However, I will not recant.

But his blind mother and his indigent brothers would have to leave the haven



Jacob Adler in "The Yiddish King Lear"

of Amsterdam were he excommunicated, and so Acosta does recant, and then regrets it, and finally commits suicide.

Here was the classic struggle of the modern Jew, played out in an imposing Western setting with lavish costumes and props of swords and black candles. When Adler learned that a Yiddish company intended to perform this play, he asked Goldfaden to adapt it for him as well. Within the same year, 1882, there were three competing Yiddish versions of *Uriel*

Acosta on the boards.

Adler literally threw himself into his first starring role. At the climactic moment of the third act, when Uriel invites the congregation in the synagogue to punish him for his sins, the actor miscalculated the distance from the altar to the stage, and cast himself down its stairs with such force that he was briefly knocked unconscious in a pool of blood. Yet he completed the performance, and he went on to make Acosta one of his signature roles. Many years later, the critic and director Harold Clurman, who married Adler's daughter Stella, described his awe upon seeing Adler as Uriel Acosta: "The man's size—I do not refer to his physique—imposed a sense of peril. Grandeur always inspires a certain shudder at life's immeasurable mystery and might."

ADLER'S MEMOIR, intermittently serialized in the American-Yiddish press between 1916 and 1925, and now translated with a running commentary by his granddaughter Lulla Rosenfeld, has the quality of a twice-told tale, since Rosenfeld has published this story before, and many of its piquant episodes have long since become part of theater lore. But the actor's personality still carries the day. At the same time that Theodor Herzl dreamed of reclaiming a homeland for the Jewish people, Adler sought to create a kind of secular synagogue where the prophetic voice and quasi-rabbinic authority could still resonate from a costumed cast. (If the comparison seems a little grandiose, so, too, did the Yiddish theater.) Adler's account (apparently written with professional assistance) vivifies the history of the theater that he helped to shape.

When pogroms and repressive laws in the wake of the tsar's assassination in 1881 set off a mass exodus of Jews from Russia, the specific ban on Yiddish theater forced its troupes to lead the way. By 1883, Adler and his wife Sonya were competing in London with the very same actors for the very same audiences, all transposed from the continent to overcrowded Whitechapel. Adler wrote that "never in Russia, never later in the worst slums of New York, were we to see such poverty as in the London of the 1880s." These harsh conditions were soon to claim his baby daughter and his wife, who died after giving birth to their second child.

The Yiddish theater in London attracted hungry audiences, but it could not find commercial or organizational backing. Its instability was exacerbated by opposition from the Anglicized Jews who wanted to see the Yiddish culture of the immigrants disappear as quickly as possible. The only warm reception that Adler

COURTESY ALFRED A. KNOPE

ever received from his great-uncle Dr. Hil-
 lel Nissim Adler, the chief rabbi of Lon-
 don, was when he came to ask for help in
 getting to America. Six difficult years after
 coming to England, Adler joined a second
 exodus to New York.

AMERICA DID NOT disappoint. The
 Jewish religion fared not too well
 in the land of free enterprise,
 which rewarded those who shed their
 beards and their Sabbaths; and Jewish
 family life was bruised by the immigrant
 process that parentified the children and
 made the aged obsolete. Yet the theater
 was just the place where immigrants could
 come together and vicariously experience
 a sense of home. Adler wanted to provide
 the Lower East Side not just with diver-
 sionary and sentimental entertainment,
 but also with an outlet for its noblest feel-
 ings. He wanted to perform Shakespeare
 and Ibsen for a Jewish public that was liv-
 ing in tenements and working in sweat-
 shops.

One day in 1891, Adler was introduced
 to Jacob Gordin, an émigré writer seeking
 refuge from the tsarist police. Best known
 as the founder of a "Spiritual Biblical
 Brotherhood" that had attempted to set
 up an inter-denominational agricultural
 commune in Russia, Gordin had been told
 upon coming to America that the Yiddish
 theater was the most lucrative source of
 potential income. When Adler asked him
 to adapt a German script, Gordin defi-
 antly replied that he would write only an
 original Yiddish play. He had never writ-
 ten any Yiddish before, but he brought
 Adler the finished script within a week.

The resulting collaboration trans-
 formed the Yiddish theater. *Siberia* was
 based on an item that Gordin had read
 in a Russian newspaper. It told the tale
 of an escaped prisoner who makes a new
 and prosperous life for himself, but is
 betrayed to the police by a jealous rival.
 Three of the greatest Yiddish actors
 starred in the play: David Kessler as the
 villain, Siegmund Mogulsecu as the faith-
 ful servant, and Adler as the hero who is
 led off in chains again at the end of the
 play. Gordin provided his maiden play
 with no musical interludes and no comic
 shtick; and he further changed the prac-
 tice of the Yiddish theater by insisting that
 the actors speak his lines as they were
 written, without ad libbing. According to
 the myth surrounding this performance,
 Adler responded to the restiveness of the
 audience by coming out in front of the
 curtain after the first act to ask them
 to open their hearts and their minds to
 the great new playwright. By the final
 scene, emotions in the theater were run-
 ning so high that both the actors and the
 audience broke down in tears.

In some eighty plays thereafter, before
 he died in 1909, Gordin dramatized the
 struggle of the individual against the lie
 of social arrangements and the cramp-
 ing influence of religion, especially on sex.
 Like Ibsen, he championed the cause of
 proud women who refused to trim their
 personalities or passions to social require-
 ments. His main target was the evil of
 wealth. The eponymous *Meturef*, or Mad-
 man, one of Adler's starring roles, is the
 sensitive, brilliant son of a businessman
 father who is pushed into suicide by the
 mercantile machinations of his family
 and a distrustful Jewish town. "Don't you
 know that I can see right through you?"
 he says to his tormentors, "You think
 you are smart because you can make
 money. Is that a big deal? Theft, trickery,
 swindle, substituting rotten goods for
 pure, buying cheap and selling dear, lying,
 extorting interest from the poor—the
 things you call commerce don't require
 any brains. Any fool... could carry it off."
 Gordin was a radical in search of causes,
 and America gave him leave to turn them
 into a living.

Together Gordin and Adler trans-
 formed the Yiddish theater into a moral
 arena. Gordin helped to exorcize the ghost
 of *Shmendrick*, the caricature of Jewish
 manhood who dominated Goldfaden's
 musical comedy, and who, Adler sus-

pected, still satisfied the deepest longing
 of Yiddish audiences. A compulsive edu-
 cator, Gordin not only used European
 models, he also had his characters refer to
 Lear and to Othello, so that audiences
 could become familiar with Shakespeare's
 work. For his part, Adler understood the
 Jew in history as "a patriarch, a higher
 being," someone with "a certain grandeur,
 the triumph of long patience, intellect,
 and character... imparted to him by the
 sufferings and traditions that have been
 his teachers."

It was in this spirit that Adler played the
 proud Jewish father in *The Yiddish King
 Lear*, Gordin's modern adaptation in
 which the aging patriarch David Mosheles
 decides to retire to the land of Israel,
 unwisely entrusting his fortune to his
 Orthodox daughters and sons-in-law, and
 spurning his youngest, who defies him by
 going off to study medicine. When he is
 reduced to beggary ("Give charity to the
 Jewish King Lear!") and stricken with
 blindness, it is she who helps restore his
 dignity and, thanks to "the light of sci-
 ence," even his eyesight. Adler stressed the
 man's nobility in pathos, and that is also
 how he performed Shylock in an Ameri-
 can production of *The Merchant of Venice*
 in 1903, where he alone spoke his lines in
 Yiddish. This was the same proud image
 of theater that he tried to impart to the

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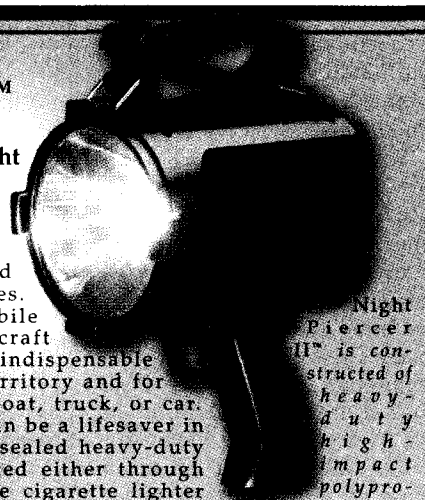
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Jews of America and, through the theater dynasty that he founded with the help of several actress-wives, to the American stage as well. It was said in the 1930s (when seventeen family members were active in American theater) that no curtain in New York went up without an Adler behind it.

OF ALL THE many facets of Yiddish culture in the United States—poetry and fiction, journalism, criticism and scholarship—none drew so far ahead of its European counterpart as Yiddish theater, and its offshoot, Yiddish film. By the time the ban on Yiddish theater was lifted in Russia, unofficially, around 1905, the Yiddish theater in America was well into its prime, and it also held its own with theater in English. The greater audacity of the Yiddish theater in its choice of themes, the high demand of its public for entertainment in its native tongue, the talent of its actors and its actresses (some of whom defected to Broadway and Hollywood, but were soon replaced by newcomers from Europe), the steady supply of new scripts by local writers: all this kept the Yiddish theater competitive through the 1920s.

Somewhere along the way, however, the needs of the theater and the needs of its audience began to diverge. Gordin's reformist zeal could still ignite the huddled masses yearning to be free, but once the immigrant Jews got their bearings, they looked elsewhere for edification. The left-wing ideology that fueled the Russian Jewish intelligentsia did not attract the mass of Jews who aspired to enter the middle class. The longer it thrived in America, the more the Yiddish theater experimented with innovative staging and themes. The longer they spent in America, the more Yiddish audiences expected the Old World language to satisfy their nostalgia for the Old World.

The nature of this impasse can be intuited from a new anthology of Yiddish plays translated by Nahma Sandrow, who has also written a useful history of the Yiddish theater. Sandrow's principle of selection was her own taste; but as she rightly points out, all the plays were written in New York from a left-wing point of

view. Reading this collection, one is reminded not of the dictum from the *Ethics of the Fathers* that the world stands on the three pillars of Torah, Devotion, and Good Deeds, but rather on its Yiddish parody: that the world stands on money, money, and money. The deficient politics of the Jews who had no polity, and the proprieties of the Jews who were trained to discipline their appetites, seem to have left these playwrights with not too many areas of dramatic conflict. Unlike in Europe, Jews established no autonomous communal government in America, and since Jewish dramatists were not yet at home on the floor of Congress or in the West Wing, they found in class conflict, trade unionism, and strike action an equivalent to the political themes of much Western drama. With all but one exception, each of the

Jewish button-maker. (*Bronx Express* was never published in Yiddish, and has been retrieved by Sandrow from the archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.)

The craze for money took expressionist form in David Pinski's *The Treasure* (1906), in which a gravedigger's retarded son finds a couple of golden coins in the place where he buried his dog, touching off a hysterical quest on the part of the whole town that has them digging up the cemetery. In *Shop* (1926), one of seven plays that the poet H. Leivick wrote in the 1920s on socialist themes, personal feelings and temperaments clash with the moral imperative of the collective strike. The erstwhile Russian immigrants who man the shop replicate the ideological divisions within the Russian revolutionary movements, with the Bolshevik and the democratic humanist sharing pride of place.

The only exception to the pervasive economic motif of Sandrow's collection is the idyll *Green Fields* (1916). Drawing on his own memories of a rural childhood in Russia, Peretz Hirschbein describes the mild rivalry of two Jewish farming families over a pious yeshiva student whom they hire to teach their children. The timid seduction of this religious boy by the earthy daughter of his hosts promises the happiest of marriages between tradition and a life on the soil. At the



The Grand Theatre, at Canal Street and the Bowery, 1910

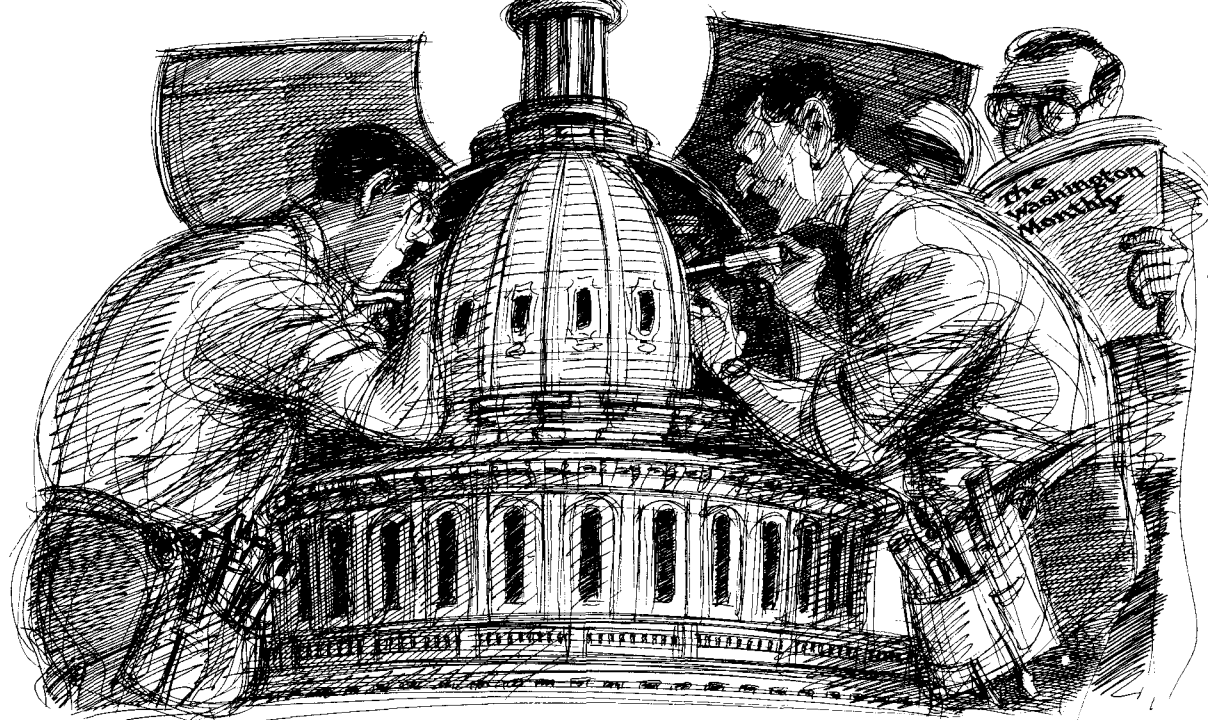
plays turns on a version of the same temptation of greed.

The opening and closing plays in Sandrow's volume, Jacob Gordin's *God, Man, and Devil* (1900) and Osip Dymov's *Bronx Express* (1919-26) are variations on the Faustian theme. In Gordin's melodrama, set in heaven and in Russia, when Satan is given leave by God to tempt the pious Hershele Dubrovner, it takes no more than a winning lottery ticket to trip the saintly scribe down the ladder of sin. Everything falls prey to his appetite: filial respect, spiritual longing (he ceases to play the violin as well as to write out the Torah), marital fidelity, common decency. Satan is robbed of an easy victory only by Hershele's belated regret, confirmed in his suicide. Dymov lightens up the Faustian theme in a jazzy dream treatment that has the advertisements in a subway car seducing Hungerproud the

time this play was written, everyone could find in it something to love: for Zionists, there was the romance of the land; for traditionalists, there was the respect accorded the Jewish scholar; for moderns, there was the emphasis on love and eros against the exclusive emphasis on spirit and mind; for socialists, there was the atmosphere of the agricultural commune. (When I first saw the film version of *Green Fields* in 1960, I thought that I was seeing a Russian *kolhoz*. In fact, the movie was shot in New Jersey.) Unlike the other plays in Sandrow's collection, this bucolic comedy satisfies the sentiment for the past while siding with reform. This makes it at once the most old-fashioned and the most up-to-date.

As it happens, each of the five plays evokes some vestige of the abandoned religion. The Yiddish theater kept paying its dues to the godly culture that it sought

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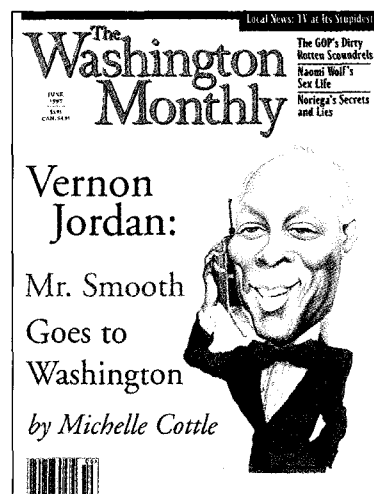
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to replace, so that there is scarcely a play on record that does not include some Jewish ceremony or ritual—a wedding or a betrothal, a Sabbath meal or a Seder, a moment of prayer or even a circumcision performed offstage. Thus, at the end of Leivick's fierce strike action, the oldest worker in the shop takes center stage to tell a quasi-Hasidic story about the holy little operator whose divine labor is to bring the Messiah by sewing the required number of pants. "Altogether simple. He will sew so many and so many pants—a million, or two, maybe three million pants—it should be the required number—and as soon as he gets to that number, the Messiah will come." When the operator dies after managing to sew barely ten thousand, earth and heaven begin to weep that the Messiah will never come, so the doughty little operator rises each night from his grave, and comes back to his shop to keep stitching away. Leivick may have intended to say that the Jewish social conscience was brought into being by the messianic tradition, an idea that certainly permeates some of his writing; but since the fable of the holy operator is not integral to the play, it could as soon be read as a Marxist critique of religious credulity, or else omitted entirely.

In his recent book, *In Search of American Jewish Culture*, Stephen Whitfield argues that the social message of American Jewish drama derives from the abuses of capitalism that the Jews encountered in America. He attributes the themes of Clifford Odets and Arthur Miller to the "corrosive effects of business and to the resulting enfeeblement of the family and the ravaged ties of community." But as we see from Adler's repertoire and from the plays in Sandrow's anthology, the social critique had been imported ready-made from Russia, and it was later softened and narrowed by Jewish playwrights in English. And the result of all this progressive dogma, now that capitalism is no longer perceived as the son of Satan, is a dated repertoire. Whatever improvement the playwrights may have expected their socialist outlook to bring to society, their philosophy and their politics robbed the theater of its greatest power, which lay in the indigenous religious sources, in the history and the soul of Judaism and Jewish peoplehood, rather than in any ideo-

Apparition: View from San Miniato

(spoken in the voice of Natalia Ginzburg)

From the hills on the left
poplars keep watch over the city.
The Arno drags its mud to the horizon;
crew teams labor in the June sun.

We read the short histories of children
written on gravestones,
take in their pictures still vivid under glass,
imagine their survivors—gone
as the garlands once laid there.

Where are the parents who erected
statues for the betrothed
thwarted by war, facing each other
in futile supplication,
apart for the first time and forever?

In the distance a tornado of sparrows
whirls over a garden
somewhere near the green-white
glimmer of a bell tower,
dissolves and regroups, pours

into the cloister, splashes out again,
the funnel overflow rising back, dispersing
into flutter and glide, and then back
to the black vortex
for the precipitous dive to the panic center.

Peg Boyers

logical message that was mistaken for their replacement. In bringing together these American plays, Sandrow has unwittingly served up a new kind of nostalgia—for the culture of the immigrant, secular Jewish Left.

MEANWHILE, SUCH entertainment as Jewish audiences in America continue to find in Yiddish derives from the tradition of Abraham Goldfaden, not Jacob Gordin. "Gordin may have captured the minds of theatergoers," writes Henry Sapoznik in his book on the recent phenomenon of klezmer music in the United States, "but that was not the body part settling into loge seats. People liked musicals." As the founder of Kapelye, the first modern Yiddish klezmer band in 1979, Sapoznik draws from the non-ideational, non-ideological part of the Yiddish repertoire, emphatically including Hasidic music. American klezmer music (*klezmer* is Yiddish for "musicians") adapted the art and the instrumentation of the European Jewish minstrel bands to the post-Woodstock

popular music scene to become the only American-Jewish art form of the second half of the twentieth century that appealed to all kinds of Jews and to their gentile compatriots.

As is well known, klezmer bands have become the rage at bar mitzvahs and weddings, at colleges and concert halls. The attraction of klezmer music owes as much to the minimal demands that it makes on its listeners as to the "Yiddish" heritage that it exploits: its lyrics are almost incidental, and are often rendered in English or composed afresh. Like most Jewish food in America, the music is "kosher-style." By shifting away from theater, which requires a full range of vocabulary, to purer music, klezmer offers the illusion of Jewish content without the expectation of Jewish knowledge, or the explicit appeal to Jewish identity.

Sapoznik's book is different from Adler's book in its attempt to locate his own accomplishments within a much fuller historical record. The original European Jewish bands, which played mostly at weddings and mostly for their fellow Jews, had their own guilds as far back as the mid-sixteenth century. In 1889, Sholem Aleichem wrote *Stempenyu*, his first successful novel, about the lead fiddler of such a *kapelye*, exposing the marginality of these homespun artists and showing off the argot that marked them as a distinct social group. The European Jewish *klezmer* were joined in performance by the *bad-khan*, the wedding master of ceremonies, whose lyrics drew from and expanded the repertoire of Yiddish folksong.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY also saw the rise of professional cantors, some of whom made the transition to the operatic stage. Although the Hasidic movement placed great value on singing as a way of communing with God, the independence of professional Jewish musicians in Europe (not to speak of their reputation for loose living) often put a strain on their relations with the rabbis. In America, however, the power structure was reversed. Entertainers acquired more authority than the clergy, even as interpreters of religious experience.

Two of the most poignant episodes in Sapoznik's book demonstrate this reversal. The author's father, a Polish soldier

who had been conscripted into the Red Army, then into the Red Army chorus, began earning his living once the family settled in America as a cantor, a *khazn*, for Orthodox synagogues. Between the mid-1950s and the late 1960s, he was hired by the large Catskills hotels to conduct such versions of the holiday services as suited the needs of the patrons. Accompanying his father in the choir, Sapoznik describes one Passover seder when 1,500 guests rushed into the dining room, drowning out all attempts to bring them to order. The father drew his happiest response when he sarcastically asked the diners whether they would prefer only half of the usual four questions and ten plagues. The basso in the choir then sang a bathetic rendition of Paul Robeson's "Go Down, Moses." "So much for tradition," Sapoznik mordantly remarks.

THE INVERSION OF status between commercial entertainment and religious authority had occurred much earlier, during the Golden Age of Yiddish popular music between the two world wars. Sapoznik adduces a remarkable excerpt from the memoirs of the great vaudevillian Gypsy Rose Lee, who angrily discovered—or rather, whose mother angrily discovered—when she arrived for a Cincinnati booking in the 1920s that she had been given second billing to the great cantor Yossele Rosenblatt. One can be sure that the vaudevillian kept an eye on the competition. She saw a man walk out on a fully lit stage with all the house lights on (at his insistence) and without any entrance music, wearing a shabby and not very clean black suit, "almost comical with his long, curly beard and the skullcap on the back of his head."

The orchestra played softly as the cantor began to sing. It wasn't a song I had ever heard before and I couldn't understand the Hebrew words but I knew he was singing about all the sadness in the world. He had the clearest, purest voice I had ever heard. There was a gentleness and strength, and warmth in it. I felt that if God were to sing to us, this is how His voice would sound.

Night after night Rosenblatt brought down the house, but he was never there to take the applause: he never waited for it, but simply walked out of the theater after his final note.

The strip-dancer appreciates the higher quality of this performer with whom she shared a bill, but clearly it is her profane sensibility that set the tone for the show. So, too, in the later klezmer culture of our day, the devotional components of

Jewishness have been kept strictly subordinate to their entertainment value. Rosenblatt's diffidence in bringing his sacred music to the stage belongs to a bygone age. We have less stringent standards for authenticity. Jews have brought a great deal to the public arts in America, but they have brought very little of the strongest and most precious elements of their tradition. Even Sapoznik, who inher-

its from his parents an appreciation of the religious dimension of Jewish peoplehood, is still hopelessly stuck with the idea of klezmer as a countercultural show of resistance, as if a belief in music sufficed to sustain a whole identity, as if every part of the tradition were as valuable as every other part. He does not see that the true Jewish counterculture in America has always been Judaism itself. ■

Sir Hurt Hurt

By RICHARD JENKYNs

Osbert Sitwell
by Philip Ziegler

(Knopf, 446 pp., \$30)

OSBERT SITWELL SHARED with his older sister Edith the inconvenience of possessing the temperament of genius without the genius. The self-assurance with which they told the world what great artists they were—or apparent self-assurance, since there may have been a few nagging doubts beneath the bluster—has immensely damaged their reputation. F.R. Leavis suggested that the Sitwells belonged to the history of publicity rather than the history of literature.

Yet it was also their ticket to fame. From the 1920s to the 1950s, the three Sitwells—Sacheverell, the youngest and most normal of them, completed the trio—forced themselves upon the attention of the public through the sheer power of self-advertisement: they were a conspicuous part of Britain's high bohemia, and though they always attracted hostility from some ("two wiseacres and a cow," one wit called them), many readers and critics held them in very high regard. Their star has now dimmed. None of them is much read today. And yet an interest in them as personalities, and as cultural phenomena, persists. In 1978 John Pearson published a collective biography of all three, *Façades*, while Edith and Sachie (as Sacheverell was known) have each had biographies of their own since. And now Philip Ziegler's affable, elegant, and often witty life of Osbert follows in their wake.

RICHARD JENKYNs is a fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and the author, most recently, of *Virgil's Experience* (Oxford University Press).

Was he worth it? The Sitwells first came to fame as advocates of modernism, singing the praises of Diaghilev and the Ballet Russe, of Stravinsky, Picasso, and modern French art. They also promoted the early career of William Walton, their closest encounter with authentic genius. Following Edith, whose verses enjoyed loud acclaim, Osbert tried to turn himself into a poet. He also wrote several novels, a large quantity of upper-middlebrow journalism, and a number of travel books, of which *Escape with Me*, an engaging account of a few months in China, is the best known. But Osbert's bid for Parnassus is bound to rest on his four volumes of autobiography (or five, if a pendant volume of literary portraits is included). His was a pampered and selfish life, but it was not an idle one.

It is impossible to assess the Sitwells as writers without confronting their faults of character. Their abiding problem was that their self-conceit took two not easily compatible forms: pride in birth and pride in art. They were indeed of fairly grand family. On their father's side, they came from a line of Derbyshire landowners who could be traced back to the fourteenth century (though most of the money had come from ironworks and the manufacture of nails, a fact not stressed by their descendants); the baronetcy that made Osbert "Sir Osbert" dated from the later eighteenth century. Osbert's maternal grandfather was an earl, but alas, a first earl, the ennobled scion of vastly rich parvenus. Luckily, though, one great-grandfather on this side was a Duke of Beaufort, which enabled the Sitwells to claim descent from medieval royalty. Edith, in whom pride of

blood was swollen to tumorous proportions, used to boast about the Plantagenet features of Osbert and herself. (It is true that her long gaunt face and her anteater nose did bear an odd resemblance to the effigies of the Angevin kings on the tombs at Fontevrault.)

Yet the Sitwell trio also believed in the preeminence of talent, especially their own talent. It was the artist who was the true aristocrat among men. How was this to be reconciled with the importance that they attached to rank? In his autobiography, Osbert attempted to square the circle by suggesting that the Sitwells' talent, like their social position, was inherited. A good try, but it won't really wash. It would be hard to maintain that the English aristocracy has been generally characterized by artistic flair.

THE TRUTH IS that Osbert especially was insatiable of outward signs of distinction. "I love being a baronet," he told a friend in a rare burst of self-awareness after his father's death. "It's the most heavenly new toy." The marks of official recognition that he received (admittedly pretty modest) were not nearly enough: when he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, he lamented that he had not been given a Knighthood of the Garter, and when he was made a Commander of the British Empire, he lamented that it was not the Order of Merit. In the later 1930s he became acquainted with the Royal Family, and was thrilled to be invited to Windsor and Balmoral. Besotted with the Queen—that is, the present Queen Mother—he would let her know when he was coming to London in the hope of cadging a luncheon at Buckingham Palace. ("Do you think it's sauce?" he asked anxiously.) Well, we all love the Queen Mum, but it is difficult to believe that it was her intellectual or artistic enthusiasms that drew him to her flame.

Osbert also persuaded himself that he had played an important role in settling the General Strike of 1926, a view that he was unwise enough to repeat in one of his memoirs. In his youth he had stood for Parliament; and had he been elected, it would not have been a success. Where politics was concerned, his ability to get things wrong was almost unerring. He admired Italian fascism and joined the New Party of Oswald Mosley, the would-be British Mussolini. While deploring Hitler's excesses, he thought that the Jews had in part contributed to their own ill-treatment. "I think that Germany, for me, now plays the game," he wrote. "That is to say that Hitlerism ... is a true development of the English public school spirit."

Throughout the 1930s, he was an

ardent appeaser. When the war broke out, he thought that Germany had a case, and almost to the end he was convinced that it would win. Churchill, he believed, was hopeless and pathetic. In the later 1940s he was sure that Britain would have a fascist government within ten years. And in 1968, when Enoch Powell made the notorious speech on colored immigration in which, "like the old Roman," he "seemed to see the Tiber foaming with much blood," Osbert expressed complete approval.

ALL THIS BLIMPISHNESS, and worse, seems a world away from the self-proclaimed avant-gardist of the 1920s. But maybe the truth is that what the Sitwells offered had always been modernism lite (which could indeed be a reason for their success). "Why are they thought daring and clever?" Virginia Woolf asked bemusedly. Aldous Huxley noted that their great object was to rebel, "only one finds that the steps they are prepared to take, the lengths they will go, are so small as to be hardly perceptible to the naked eye." Osbert, for his part, got in a dig at Woolf's set: in *Escape with Me*, he claimed to have visited the Ancestral Hall of the Exalted Brave in Peking, a retirement home for distressed eunuchs. They found the word "Bloomsbury" difficult to pronounce, but were cheered when they realized that it denoted "a Refuge for Eunuchs, like their own," and expressed eagerness to see for themselves this English way of life.

Edith perhaps had some genuine modernism in her, but Osbert's deepest instincts were pretty traditional. Ziegler tries rather half-heartedly to stick up for Osbert's poetry, but it is truly dire stuff; and it is baffling that Osbert could have considered himself to be on T.S. Eliot's side against the so-called Georgian poets. When he sought to be satirical, he was cheap and banal, as well as metrically flabby. When he fell in love, and the mask dropped, he became sub-Swinburnian:

You are the one I love: your flesh more
sweet
Than languorous roses swooning in June
heat ...

That, at least, was not for publication; but this was given to the world in 1925:

Through his iron glades
Rides Winter the Huntsman.
All colour fades
As his horn is heard sighing.

A couple of years later he published *England Reclaimed*, a collection of eclogues about splendid, deferential country people who remembered the good old

days, "When things were properly kept up... When the horses filled the stable" and the red-faced gentry rode after the tawny fox. This was merely the English cowpat school of verse, sentimental and conventional, and not even a good example of its kind. The collection ended with a flourish of brass:

Sound out proud trumpets,
And you, bugles blow,
Over the English Dead...

By jingo!—and this from the champion of Picasso and Stravinsky.

THE VOLUMES OF autobiography, which appeared between 1944 and 1950, nicely evoke the Sitwells' two family homes, Renishaw Hall in Derbyshire and Montegufoni in Tuscany, a castle so vast and rambling that it is almost a village. There are some fine remembrances of things past in these volumes, and some subtlety, though not as much as the elaborated prose seems to aspire to. But the books are chiefly memorable for the richly comic portrait of Osbert's father, Sir George, who is depicted as half-monster, half-buffoon, genuinely artistic and imaginative (the Sitwells' belief in inherited brilliance required this much) but wildly selfish and eccentric. (It is difficult to judge what resemblance this oedipal assassination bears to the reality, but from the clues that one can pick up from Ziegler, it looks as though Osbert may have been deeply unfair to a man who seems in an odd way to have been loving to his son, generous, and rather brave.)

Beside Sir George, in these volumes, stands the scarcely less grotesque figure of Henry Moat, his insolently faithful butler, well described by Ziegler as the Sancho Panza to his master's Quixote. "Sir George is the strangest old bugger you ever met," Moat once told a visitor—a remark that was technically more accurate of Sir George's son. Since homosexuality carried a glaring stigma at the time and sodomy was a criminal offense, it is understandable that Osbert should have kept quiet about his emotional life, but other omissions or missed opportunities are harder to forgive.

The oddity of Renishaw is that it stands in a mining area, with coal-pits almost at the gates; the fascinating mix of the urban and the rural, the grand and the squalid, that was to be exploited by D.H. Lawrence, who was born only a few miles away, makes little showing in Osbert's pages. It interfered with his sense of the family's aristocratic splendour. There was a genuine drama in Osbert's youth: his mother went to prison for fraud. He has to handle this subject in the end, but he does

so with obvious reluctance, so that (as Ziegler points out) the reader has some difficulty in understanding what she had actually done. In another writer, the reticence might be ascribed to filial piety, but in this case it is all too obvious that the impairment of the family dignity is what chiefly moves him.

And so Osbert's faults of character damaged his best chance of writing a masterpiece. The autobiographer does not need to be a good man—some of the best memoirists have been conspicuous sinners—but he does need self-awareness and the readiness to open himself to the reader's inspection. Osbert is too concerned to make an impression. His purpose is not self-revelation. It is to make sure we appreciate how wonderful he is.

And the style is too florid. By the end it becomes simply absurd: "I, a Citizen of the Sunset Age, an Englishman, who saw the world's great darkness gathering, salute you, Stranger, across the Chasm." The cruellest jibe was to come from Philip Larkin, who privately devised with Kingsley Amis (in Larkin's own words) "a literary award for the book of the year combining the greatest pretension and the least talent: it was called the Osbert." That was too harsh. Virginia Woolf was closer to the mark: "I don't care for Osbert's prose; the rhododendrons grow to such a height in it." While she objected to the style, others found fault with the substance. "It isn't bad in a podgy way, his rigmarole," Lawrence Durrell thought, "but God, it is depressing, the airs and manners. Compare it to 18th century memoirs. No tang. No punch. Just feeble mannered anecdotes." One might retort that some of the anecdotes are excellent, while still feeling that Durrell's censure is at least half true. Perhaps it was not only in Bloomsbury that the retired eunuchs would have felt at home.

OSBERT SITWELL'S PRESENCE is very vivid in Ziegler's book, the fleshy face, like a superior fish; the body heavy, pink, and fair; the sense of comedy, and the sense of self-pity; the touch of the bully, and the wit of the raconteur. There is a certain power of personality throughout. Ziegler is much less good on Osbert's context, and some things are oddly muffled. It is never fully explained, for example, why Noël Coward offended the Sitwells so deeply, though the story is well known. (Coward had scored a hit in his review *London Calling!* with a sketch entitled *The Swiss Family Whittlebot*, in which the poetess Hernia Whittlebot recited her verses, assisted by her brothers Gob and Sago.) It is evident that Christine Maclaren, later Lady Aberconway, was a close friend to Osbert, a man

who seems to have had few real friends, but she remains an entirely shadowy figure, flitting in and out of these pages only occasionally.

This is an amusing book, but beneath the surface the story seems profoundly sad. Osbert, Ziegler says, had "a lifetime tendency to believe that he was ill unless positive evidence to the contrary was forthcoming," an uncharacteristically waspish comment from a generally indulgent biographer; but for much of his life he did indeed labor under a wretched variety of ailments. His childhood was emotionally starved: he disliked his father and seems to have felt no compensating warmth for his mother. When Sir George finally died, he confided to Lady Aberconway, "Oh, the freedom in the air, the rollicking carefree feeling, and the general sense of relief." One cannot readily imagine a sadder kind of joy.

For much of his life he was in love with David Horner, a bloodsucker who fastened on his pathetically dependent admirer for money, and disappeared from time to time in search of mysterious promiscuities elsewhere; this attachment eventually dissolved in bitterness and re-creation. The relationship with Sachie was to sour through quarrels over money and property. Edith remained adoring until the end, but she loathed Horner venomously, so that she could seldom be with her brother without hatred festering in the house. The servant problem, both at Renishaw and at Montegufoni, acquired the character of a gothic nightmare, somewhere between "Fawlt Towers" and "The Addams Family": the retainers in England seemed half-mad, and in Italy they were liable to be entirely so. One manservant had a father-in-law who was inclined to roam the castle with a shotgun, threatening to murder the inhabitants. Another announced that he would have to leave, because one of his feet was growing longer than the other. It was discovered later that he had headed for Montegufoni—where else?—after escaping from the lunatic asylum at Volterra.

DESPITE THE MELANCHOLY in his life, it remains hard to warm to Osbert Sitwell. For one thing, there was his selfishness, seen at its worst in the Second World War. He spent most of the duration trying to avoid letting the war affect his life at all, with fair success. But oh, how he suffered. Thanks to restrictions on fuel, life at Renishaw had become "squalid and middle-class," he complained. Alec Guinness and his wife came to stay, with instructions from Edith to conceal the presence of their infant son, because Osbert could not abide babies. When the truth accidentally

leaked out, Osbert bravely found that he could bear it, provided he never had to set eyes on the child. Well, in wartime everyone has to make sacrifices.

Equally unappealing was Osbert's readiness to mock and to satirize other people while being extremely sensitive about slights towards himself. The family name had originally been Hurt, but an eighteenth-century ancestor, Sir Sitwell Hurt, on inheriting an estate collaterally, had changed his surname, thus becoming, absurdly, Sir Sitwell Sitwell. Evelyn Waugh suggested that Osbert, given his capacity for taking offence, might be better named Sir Hurt Hurt. But Edith may have been a bad influence. Her intolerance of criticism seemed sometimes half-deranged. Ziegler likens Osbert's attitude to that of Jane Austen's Mr. Bennet: "For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours and laugh at them in our turn?" But even setting aside the fact that Mr. Bennet is another emotional starveling, the comparison is badly misplaced. Osbert did love to mock others, but he could not bear to be mocked by them.

AS PART OF the sociology of British culture, Osbert makes a very interesting study. But will any part of him last? On the whole Ziegler tries not to make exaggerated claims for his subject, but he ends by declaring that "twentieth-century English letters would have looked very different if he had not existed." That is an astonishing judgement. It would surely be truer to say that if Osbert Sitwell had not existed, English letters, except for the absence of Osbert Sitwell, would look exactly the same. Ziegler thinks that the autobiography will still be read in a hundred years' time; but hardly anyone seems to read it at the moment, though the best parts of it do deserve to live.

For the time being, in any event, Osbert is met, as he would hate to know, principally through his connection with others more talented than himself. The only work of his that most people are likely to come across today is his libretto for Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, and even this, being a selection of passages from the Old Testament, is not so much the words of Sitwell as the word of God. (There was in fact some argument about whether Osbert was entitled to royalties, but no one else was claiming them.) He also lives on in Lawrence's pages as a partial model for another literary baronet, Sir Clifford Chatterley. Alice wondered if she might be part of the White King's dream; and Osbert Sitwell has had the ill luck to survive as another man's fictional embodiment of cultivated impotence. ■

WALL STREET DIARIST

Thud

TURNS OUT STOCKS WERE risky after all. Turns out the stock market can't be the national pastime, because nobody loses money playing the national pastime. Turns out the market drops much faster than it goes up. These are some of the lessons learned since the stock market peaked a month ago, and I, for one, don't mind that it finally happened. For the last year, this market has made my life hell; I run money professionally, and I was getting the pants beaten off me by every individual I met.

YOU SEE, I HAD TO MANAGE OUR portfolio to maximize the upside and minimize the downside, meaning I had to strike a balance between risk and reward. Individuals had no such constraints. They didn't have to tell anyone what they were up to; they didn't have to disclose that they had borrowed to the hilt to finance greater and greater gains. They didn't care about the downside because from NASDAQ 2,500 to NASDAQ 5,000 *there was no downside*. The individual, armed with information transmitted for free on the Internet (information I once had to pay for!), had the edge on me. It was like Tiger Woods playing miniature golf and getting his head handed to him by just about everybody on the course. And then in three weeks it all evaporated.

THE MEDIA SEEMS RELUCTANT TO call it a crash. OK. How about a vaporization? Or maybe a capital disappearing act? The prices simply vanished, some so fast that any attempt to fish the bottom was met with absolutely extraordinary losses. Most sell-offs get triggered by discrete events: Iraq invades Kuwait, sending the price of oil through the roof; the Asian or Russian or Mexican or Brazilian market gets obliterated, causing our market to hiccup; or the Fed cools demand by making cash so attractive that people stop spending. Not this sell-off. Oh, a couple of smaller events played a minor role. There was the one-two punch of a harder-than-expected judicial ruling against Microsoft and a softer-than-expected revenue estimate by the software giant, which helped derail one of the market's leaders.

Accounting shenanigans at Microstrategy, the hottest of the hot new stocks, caused people to wonder whether we'd given these kids too much money. A strong consumer-price-index number fueled fears that the Fed would have to tighten even more than it had been tightening. But none of these caused the crash of April 2000. This one was triggered by a supply problem: too much equity flooding the system with no place to go.

THIS DIAGNOSIS CONFOUNDS THE textbooks, which tell us that supply can never stop a bull market. But the textbook writers have never seen the likes of this stock market. Ever since the market bottomed in October 1998, underwriters have been pumping out a massive number of new issues to take advantage of the public's craving for Internet-related action. First they created stocks for e-tailing. Then they created stocks for business-to-business e-commerce. And, finally, they offered stocks for bricks-and-mortar companies getting involved with the Web. More than 300 of these companies went public during this period, crowding out any other companies that might need public capital. In each case, the underwriters slyly teased investors by offering only a sliver of stock at the start. That created those famous "pops" in new deals that made everyone salivate for the next big offering. The result: Stock after stock screamed to new highs as hope that the Net would trump all avenues of commerce took hold. There was just one problem: You couldn't lock up the rest of the stock forever. Underwriters can typically keep insiders from selling for six months, but once that period is over there isn't much to stop all of the sidelined stock from hitting the market.

THAT DIDN'T MUCH MATTER AS LONG as the future stayed far enough away that it could not disappoint the present. But last year's Christmas showed that the Internet was the perfect way to shop. Which, paradoxically, is where the trouble started. The demand for e-tail goods swamped companies; deliveries came late or not at all. Sites froze. People ended up going to the mall anyway. It was a bust of a Net holiday season. That caused the e-tailers, the first darlings, to plummet as the insiders and penny-a-share venture capitalists bailed like mad. For a while, the business-to-business plays took the e-tailers' place; then so many of them went public that they started going head-to-head with each other. Finally, even the infrastructure plays became overwhelming in number, as company after company went public to satisfy what looked like insatiable public demand.

BEGINNING IN MARCH, THE STOCK from the business-to-business plays that had been kept off the public shelf began to hit. First it trickled, but as the market kept rallying it poured. Finally, in March, it flooded, and by April we were inundated with so much stock supply that it overwhelmed demand. Mutual funds, running full tilt, didn't have any more money to buy. Individuals, leveraged up to their eyeballs in the greatest margin binge in this nation's history, had no more room unless they sold other stocks first. For a few fleeting weeks it seemed as if all we had was a rotation, as money flowed back to the old economy from the new economy, where the supply was based. But the inflation picture changed, in part due to roaring consumer demand stimulated by the stock market, and even those issues faltered. Suddenly there was no place to hide. As prices came down, margin clerks at brokerage houses moved swiftly to hog, and then sell, the collateral that individuals had pledged—so they could continue to take down the new issues and the billion-dollar baby companies.

THINGS CULMINATED RIGHT BEFORE April 15, as individuals scrambled to raise cash to pay the Internal Revenue Service. The figures showed the NASDAQ with its worst week ever, but that doesn't tell much of the story. Even as the smoke cleared and many of the NASDAQ's seasoned issues came back, the newer companies continued to fall lower, because the supply didn't seem to mind that the demand had vanished. With the decline came the grudging recognition that the dot-com era has at last ended. The deals for more fanciful companies are being scuttled. At this pace, even the insiders may soon not be up on their holdings. And, just when the money is beginning to run out—many of these new companies raised much less capital than in previous eras in order to generate that pop—there is nowhere to turn. Everyone is tapped out.

CAN IT COME BACK? WILL WE SEE A return to the Wild West period of capital formation if we just let things lie low for a little while? I don't think so. The money lost has been too great, the experience too sobering. And, if it tries to come back, you can count on the Fed to stomp it right back down to keep this economy from overheating. But, boy, was it fun while it lasted. For most people, anyway.

JAMES CRAMER

JAMES CRAMER is manager of a hedge fund and cofounder of TheStreet.com. He also writes a column for *New York* magazine.

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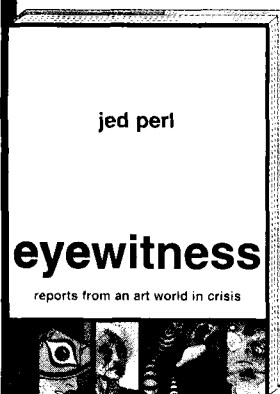
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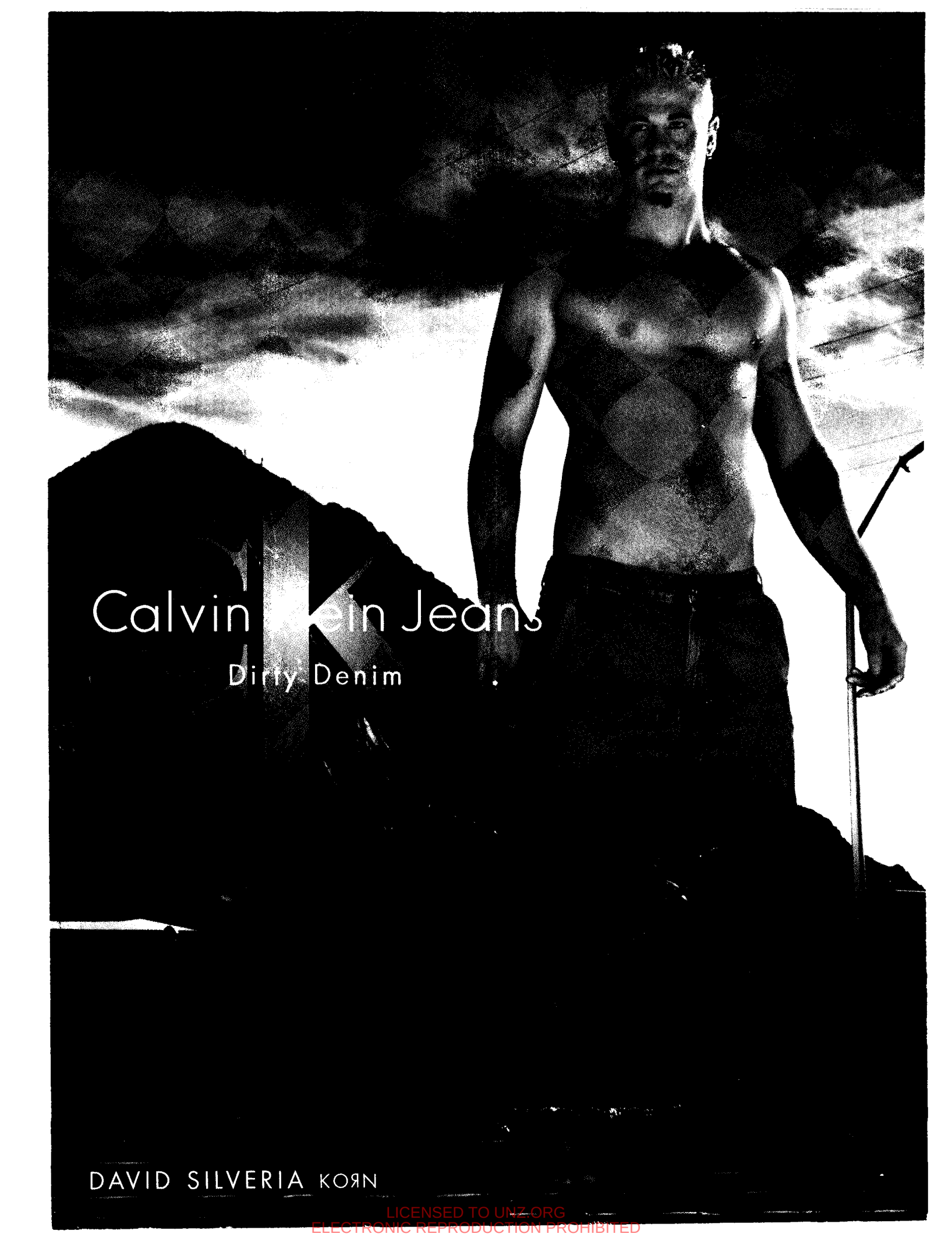
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